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THE LIFE OF S. PHILIP NERI.

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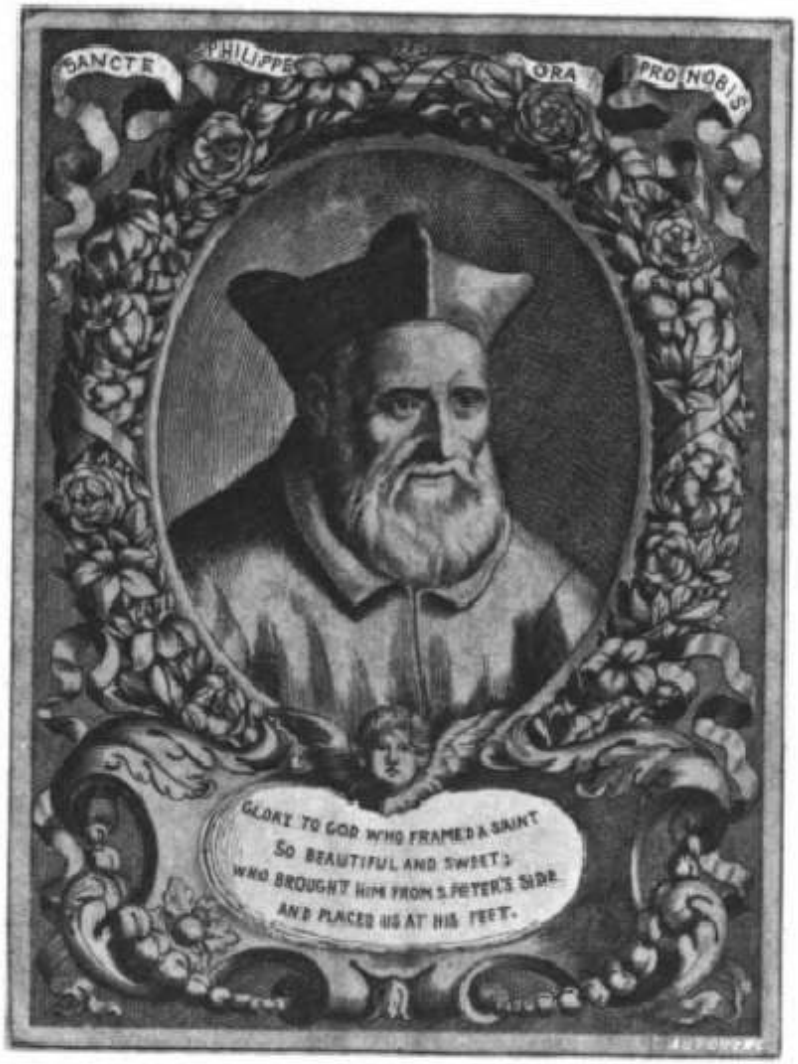
SANCTE PHILIPPE ORA PRO NOBIS
GLORY TO GOD WHO FRAMED A SAINT
SO BEAUTIFUL AND SWEET;
WHO BROUGHT HIM FROM S. PETER'S SIDE
AND PLACED HIS AT HIS FEET.

S. Philippus Nerius

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THE LIFE

OF

SAINT PHILIP NERI,

APOSTLE OF ROME.

BY

ALFONSO, CARDINAL CAPECELATRO,

ARCHBISHOP OF CAPUA,
AND LIBRARIAN OF HOLY CHURCH.
SOMETIME SUPERIOR OF THE ORATORY OF NAPLES:

TRANSLATED BY

THOMAS ALDER POPE, M.A.

OF THE ORATORY.

Second Edition.

VOL. I.

LONDON: BURNS & OATES, LIMITED.
NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO: BENZIGER BROTHERS.
1894

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TO THE

MOST EMINENT AND MOST REVEREND

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, D.D.

CARDINAL OF THE HOLY ROMAN CHURCH

BY THE TITLE OF S. GIORGIO IN VELABRO, AND

SUPERIOR OF THE BIRMINGHAM ORATORY,

This Translation of the Life of the Dear Father

WHOSE INSTITUTE IT HAS BEEN GIVEN HIM

TO PLANT IN ENGLAND,

AND TO TEND THESE MANY YEARS,

WRITTEN BY ONE WHOSE GENIUS AND VIRTUES ARE THE

CONSOLATION OF THE ORATORY IN ITALY,

IS, WITH HIS PERMISSION,

AND WITH PROFOUND VENERATION,

INSCRIBED

BY HIS AFFECTIONATE SON IN S. PHILIP,

THE TRANSLATOR.

Ilen, E. S. 7/- June 28, 1915 (H)
(2 vols)

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PREFACE.

ALFONSO CAPECELATRO, the writer of this life of S. Philip, was born in 1824. He received an education befitting the son of the Duke of Castel Pagano, and at the age of sixteen was admitted into the Oratory of Naples. In 1864 he was elected Superior, an office he retained for many years; and by his prudence and tact, as well as by his personal influence, guided his Congregation through the troubles and vexations of the usurpation. Early in 1879 he was named by his Holiness Leo XIII. sub-librarian of Holy Church in succession to the Pope's brother, who was then created Cardinal; in October 1880 he was appointed by the same august authority to the archbishopric of Capua; and in July 1885 he was raised to the dignity of Cardinal, the Holy Father assigning him as his title the Church of SS. Nereus and Achilleus, of which the Venerable Cesare Baronio, whose name meets us so often in this Life, was titular.

In earlier life he devoted his great powers as a thinker and writer to the illustration and defence of the faith, and his works have passed through several editions, and taken their place among the classics of religious literature in Italy. Besides several minor

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writings and sermons, he has published: *Newman e l'Oratorio Inglese*, a vigorous sketch of the Oratory and of the renovation of the faith in England; an examination of the writings of Ernest Renan, and of Mr. Gladstone's attack on the loyalty of Catholics; *la Vita di Gesù Christo*, in two volumes; and three volumes entitled *la Dottrina Cattolica esposta*, a work pronounced by competent judges, themselves writers of renown, to be both in substance and form a masterpiece. He has also given to the world three historical works, which cast light on three great periods of the Church's history; the Lives of S. Peter Damian, of S. Catherine of Siena, and of S. Philip Neri. To this last work, which is here offered to the reader in an English dress, he brought qualifications of no common order; his lifelong and tender devotion to the saint, the researches of many years into the treasures of the archives of the Naples Oratory and of the Vallicella, as well as of the other Oratories of Italy, and the access his high office gave him to the Pontifical records. Of his work the reader will judge. To obviate misconception of its scope it is scarcely necessary to say that this life was not written to supersede Gallonio and Bacci—that cannot be. Gallonio is of unique and inestimable value as the witness of one who tells us *what he had heard and seen and looked upon, and his hands had handled*, in a style which reminds us of a stanza of Dante or of some portrait of old time, with an antique grace and charm which fascinate us the more the oftener we look on it. And Bacci, writing with the processes of the saint's canonization before him, has left us a storehouse

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of records of his wonderful words and deeds which can never grow old, and with which we can never dispense.

In these volumes we have the life of S. Philip amidst the circumstances and the men of his time. We trace year by year the steps of the way by which he, who entered the Eternal City in 1533 a friendless and unknown youth, became the acknowledged apostle of Rome. We grow into an acquaintance with the eminent and holy men who formed the galaxy of his disciples, and are thus insensibly taught to feel his incomparable greatness; even as from the number and size of its encircling bodies we infer the mass and splendour of the central light, and the energy of its attracting power. When we have closed this history, the light from the pages of Gallonio and Bacci is sensibly clearer and more tender; it stands towards them as their complement, and to a certain extent as their interpretation; it supplies, it may be, a warp on which their precious materials may be woven into a more symmetrical, and therefore more striking and beautiful whole.

From some expressions of the writer it has seemed that he at times attributes to S. Philip a definite plan, kept steadily in view throughout his long apostolate; but in truth, he brings out most clearly the saint's unconsciousness of self under the Hand of God, how *he went out, not knowing whither he went*, led day by day by the kindly light—

One step enough for him,

and how his great work grew insensibly up around

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him, *as if a man should cast seed into the earth, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up whilst he knoweth not.*

In this translation I have not ventured to change, seldom and slightly to compress. The portrait is by a master; it would be hazardous to meddle with one touch of his hand. It is, speaking under correction, so faithful that it may seem to smack somewhat too strongly of its native soil. But it is well we should feel as we read that we have before us the thoughts of an Italian mind, serene, luminous, and subtle, and the rich feeling of a Neapolitan heart, expressed in warm and sympathetic words.

To the translator his work has been a labour of love, and its own reward. He seems to himself to know S. Philip as he did not know him before; and to know him is to love. May these volumes render our dear Saint and Father more intimately known by others also, and more trustfully loved!

THE ORATORY, BIRMINGHAM,
Feast of the Immaculate Conception,
1881.

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THE AUTHOR'S DEDICATION

OF THE SECOND EDITION.

TO MY DEAR BROTHERS OF THE ORATORY OF NAPLES.

THE books I have written hitherto have borne but two dedications: one—the Life of S. Catherine of Siena—to the memory of my beloved mother; the other—Newman and the Oratory in England—to my venerable father. And now, it remains only that I satisfy a longing desire of old time by inscribing a book to my dear *Filippini* of Naples, who have for so many years been to me in place of father, mother, and brothers.

The book I dedicate to you, my dear brothers, is naturally the Life of S. Philip Neri, your loving father and mine. I wrote it during the years in which I was still living with you, within the blessed walls of his house; and while I was printing its last sheet I was by the will of God removed, first to Rome, and then, some months later, to this archbishopric of Capua. But, though removed in bodily presence from the Congregation I love so well, I am with it evermore in thought and love and tender regret; and to it I dedicate the

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book which draws me closest to it, and which will, I trust, avail somewhat to obtain for me from God pardon, mercy, and peace.

The book is one you already know well; for many years we have read it together and pondered it, to our mutual edification and solace. The additions I have made to this second edition of it are few; it is thus the record and fruit of my long life in the Congregation; it expresses not my thoughts only; but yours; it embodies the result of conversations and researches which have drawn closer the ties of our loving brotherhood; and I offer it to you in hope that it may draw them closer still.

And here my address to you, my dearest brothers, might end, were it not that I wish to say a few words to you which may answer the questionings of many. To you, and to other *Filippini* of France, England and Austria, who are translating this Life, it has seemed that while the S. Philip it describes remains ever the same dear and tender saint whom Bacci had taught them to revere and love, he is in many respects somewhat different. This is true and unavoidable. The writers of the sixteenth century did not look at the saints precisely as we do, nor can we write of them as they wrote. He who writes about a saint, if he has Jesus Christ in his heart, will have one only aim, to glorify Jesus in His saints, and to win for Him the souls of his readers. If his soul is not filled with the love of Christ, and entranced with the ineffable beauty with which He clothes His saints, he will write badly, whatever method of writing he may prefer. Whereas if he

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loves Jesus Christ, that love will clothe his thoughts with words, now of one kind and now of another, all alike good, and all adapted to the end he proposes to himself. He may not know why he has followed this way rather than that, but there is always a sufficing reason, resting on the needs of his time, and his own individual character and tastes.

The chief difference between the method of treating the lives of the saints in the sixteenth century, and that adopted by many writers in our own time, are two. The first is, that earlier writers did not care to follow the chronological order of events. They followed the processes of canonization step by step, with scarcely anything in addition. And hence, as in the processes the proof of the several virtues and of miracles is quite distinct from the historical life, which is generally very short, these Lives are rather works of piety full of tenderest emotion, than true and proper biographies, like those of the earlier ages of the Church.[1] They are wanting in order of development, in variety, and above all in historical movement and life. They tell us of many virtues, many actions, which have beautified the life of a man; but they do not reveal to us the man himself, the whole man, nor those harmonies of nature and of grace which make up that amazing and unearthly legend, the Life of a Saint. Modern writers follow the example of the more ancient, and aim at giving to the Lives of the saints a fitting proportion

[1] In Bacci the narrative occupies less than a quarter of the book, and ends with the foundation of the Oratory, twenty years before the saint's death.

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and beauty and order and fulness; and when they do this without loss of devotional warmth, they do good service to religion and the Church.

The other point of difference is, that the writers of the sixteenth century either neglected altogether, or touched only incidentally on, the relations in which the life of the saint stood towards the ecclesiastical and civil history of his time. Modern writers study these relations and strive to exhibit them fully, as the changed conditions of society demand. The charity of Jesus Christ urges us and enkindles us. Our hearts ache to see that modern society has parted company with the saints we love; and so we lift up our voice to proclaim that these saints were not only good beyond the furthest reach of nature, but that they were in their day the great benefactors of both Church and State. We hear it said that our saints saved some few souls indeed, and did some miracles, and shone with a light supernatural and unapproachable, but that they were not really great men; and so we make it a point to show that they were truly great, even on the passing scene of this world's history, and that they alone were great with a true and real greatness. It is said that the Catholic saint is not great; for how can he be indeed great who prays, and humbles and mortifies himself? And hence we do not deem it enough to set forth the infinite beauty of prayer and mortification and humility; we show the influence of our saints on the society of their time, how they guided its movements, decided its destiny, moulded and changed it, and sowed in it those seeds of virtue and science and civilization which now

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gladden us with their fruit. We aim at exhibiting the twofold sanctity, grandeur, and beneficence of our saints —first in the salvation of souls,—and then, in the salvation of society; and how that heroism of virtue, which is salvation and blessing to so many souls, is moreover an everflowing fount of prosperity and peace to nations. Thus is the history of the Church now treated. The Encyclicals of the Popes of past generations speak much of the marvellous influence of the Church and the Papacy on civil society, precisely as do those of our blessed Pope Leo XIII., so admirable for their wisdom and their eloquence. If then we have come to look habitually at the Church in its action on human society, it is surely a great advantage that writers of Lives of the Saints should follow this method too.

And thus it is, dearest Fathers and Brothers, that the S. Philip who comes forth before you from these pages seems at first sight somewhat different from the S. Philip whom Bacci has taught you to know and love. It does not become me to judge whether I have erred in departing to some extent from the way traced out by that inimitable writer; I would rather speak with fear and diffidence. Writing often in gloom and sadness, I may have dwelt overmuch on ascetical and mystical teachings, or on facts and analogies which pertain rather to the universal Church than to the saint, and the frame may have thus become somewhat too broad for the portrait. If I have not succeeded in my efforts to avoid this fault of proportion I should be sorry; for although it is happily a literary fault only, yet I have wished that this Life should be a work of art too, if

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souls might perchance be thus drawn to God. Those who read in the spirit of piety alone are not losers, for I have spoken fully to them of the things they have most at heart; nor will those who love history blame me for having dwelt with pleasure on what more directly concerns them.

In any case it is enough that you, my dearest brothers of Naples, and you too, the *Filippini* of all the Church, look on my book with loving sympathy. It is more than enough that I have been once more blessed with the indulgence of that loving and beloved band of readers who have gone along with me approvingly these many years, and who have done me far more good than I can hope ever to do them.

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be always with you.

CAPUA, 10*th June* 1881.

✠ ALPHONSO, *Archbishop.*

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INTRODUCTION.

I FEEL myself, to my great delight, urged by many motives to write the life of S. Philip Neri. I began to love this dear saint in my early boyhood, and to hold him in especial veneration. I was about twelve years old when I first heard him spoken of in my family; and four years later, though I knew as yet but little of him, I felt an irresistible longing to learn something of his Congregation of the Oratory. When I knew it, I sought to enter it, and from that time forward my mind and heart have clung to S. Philip. He seemed to my youthful fancy the type and ideal of all that is good and gentle and holy, and I thought it even then a great thing to try to draw near to him, at least in desire and affection.

Forty years have now passed away since the happy day on which I gave myself to God and S. Philip in the little chapel of the Girolamini; and even now I recall that day with tender and joyous emotion. I have not indeed, to my great sorrow, followed in the steps of that wise and gentle father as I ought and as I had resolved; but it consoles me still to feel that the loving veneration of my earliest years for S. Philip glows now unabated within me. My life has not been without great sorrows, great troubles, and many vanished illusions; but the light of S. Philip, like the loving eye of a father,

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has shone on me all along my way, and in my devotion to him I have found my solace and my strength.

And now that I propose to write of him, I try to bring back again, and to clothe anew with the freshness of youthful feeling, the image of him I have ever had graven on my heart; to look on that elect soul feature by feature, to go down to its depths, and to increase my love of it. I say my love; for it would be a pain to me to speak of him only with words which might content the mind indeed, without exciting the affections. Rather would I speak of him in the more vivid and penetrating language of the heart, if thereby I may the less imperfectly convey to my readers my sense of the splendour of beauty and of holiness with which it pleased God to clothe one of the saints who have loved and honoured Him most. It has always seemed to me a very difficult thing to penetrate into the mystery of the life of a saint, and to speak of it befittingly. The light of the intellect is not enough. He who would write of a saint needs, above all, that intuition of love which takes him down into the most secret recesses of the soul, which reveals so many mysteries of supernatural love, which raises us and unites us to the Infinite. To speak of a saint it behoves us to love and to live in the spirit of the words of S. Paul: *Our conversation is in heaven;* and he alone lives and loves thus whose heart is enlarged and expanded in the love of God.

Let this suffice as to my disposition of mind in writing. And now we must glance at the times in which S. Philip lived; for no great man can be understood unless we look at him in the light of his own day. And if that light do not add splendour to the figure of our saint, it will at least make it more distinct.

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The life of S. Philip fills nearly all the sixteenth century; he was born just after it had begun, he died just before it closed. Fifteen Popes, from Leo X. to Clement VIII., passed away during his life. Now, in many respects, the sixteenth century surpasses in importance the other centuries of the Church's history, and we must consider it with great attention if we would feel all its significance.

The middle ages may be said to end about the middle of the fifteenth century. No one can refuse them the glory of having tamed the barbarian races, and created a civilization at once new and Christian. About the middle of the fifteenth century were planted the germs of the new age, which unfolded themselves, strong and amidst many contradictions, in the sixteenth century. Now this new age, however rich and manifold, and perhaps because of its wealth and variety, has not yet finished its course. It would rather seem, in this our own century, to have ensnared and entangled its steps, and to be still far from its goal; and this, I think, because it has gone by degrees further and further from Christ, the Fount of life. The new impulse then given to civil life, and to some extent to religious life too, has produced much good and many evils; but many of the problems then proposed have changed their terms indeed, but have not yet received their solution. And thus it is that there are between the sixteenth century and our own many and obvious features of resemblance, which suggest many hopes and many fears.

Towards the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth, the intellect of men seemed to spring up with a bound and overflow with energy; just as sun and wind, rain and dew make the vegetation

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of a plain quick, strong, and rank. The discovery of so large a part of the world made by Columbus, and enlarged by Vespucci, Diaz, and Vasco di Gama; the wealth which flowed so temptingly in from the traffic between the old world and the new; the invention of printing, which diffused throughout a greatly changed society the written word with the speed of the word spoken; the Greek manuscripts scattered suddenly throughout the most cultured cities of Europe; the study of ancient languages; the application of strong and keen minds to the study of the natural sciences; the fever of erudition excited first in Italy and then in the whole of Europe; the arts which, forsaking the old mystical traditions, either aimed only at the imitation of nature, or copied the great masterpieces of Greece, or tried to reconcile the mystical school with the truth of nature;—all showed that a new life was tingling along the members of the European body politic. If ever there was a time when humanity was transforming itself visibly, it was then. Although the germs of the new age were sown in the middle ages themselves, yet the changes made in the sixteenth century were so vast, so sudden, so new, that the historian is amazed and almost bewildered. When he tries to investigate the causes of these changes, he comes across the gravest difficulties; for that century was full of contradictions, and if, on one hand, it made great strides in learning, science, and art, it was at once the stormiest and the most languid century of the Church's history. It was amidst these splendours of letters and science and art that ruins were heaped up all over Europe, especially in Italy, then more than ever the scene of struggles, divisions, treasons, and servitude, of which it had had no experience so long as it bowed to the authority of the

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keys of S. Peter; and what is still worse is, that then we see morals little by little relaxed and corrupted, authority and true Christian liberty passing away, the marvellous vigour of the men of the preceding generation either gone or turned wholly to evil, and all ideas most strangely and piteously confounded and entangled. This is the general view of that century when looked at calmly and without passion.

If we examine more closely the life of thought in its relations to religion and morals, we discern three changes of vital importance, each of which we must weigh with care. The first was a feverish eagerness to transfuse into christian Europe the forms and the spirit of paganism; the second, an overweening independence of the human mind; the third, a new germ of discord and secret struggle between the religious and the civil life of nations.

In regard of the first, the uprising of the old paganism, we can now hardly believe the unanimous testimony of contemporary historians. In the middle ages, indeed, the great pagan writers had been held in high honour; but then men strove to harmonise them with Christianity, or read them in the light spread over the world by the Word of God. And this most reasonably; for it is the Word of God that enlightens every man, and every gleam of light comes from Him, even though it shone before His coming upon earth. In the sixteenth century, on the contrary, such was the fever of paganism in Europe, and in Italy especially, that nothing seemed worthy of praise or esteem that was not pagan. And so every good tradition of the middle ages was shattered. No prince could hope to be called great, except in so far as he imitated some prince or hero of Greece or Rome. The man who loved liberty must be a

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Brutus or a Gracchus. History, disdaining the modest lowliness of the old chronicles, and aspiring to be something great, must be the copy of Thucydides, or Livy, or Tacitus. Plato was studied more than the Gospels. The divine wisdom seemed bare and poor in comparison with that of the great philosopher whose highest utterances were yet, in truth, but dim adumbrations of it. A man could not be held learned unless he knew Greek better than his mother-tongue; no eloquence could charm or rouse if it did not servilely copy the periods of Demosthenes and Cicero. And the copying the exquisite forms of the ancient classics was not enough; men must think their thoughts and feel with their tastes. The Bible itself, in the judgment of the men of that time, was worthless in comparison with the old writers; so that Bembo, who yet was a cardinal and secretary to Pope Leo, writes to Sadolet, also a cardinal and secretary of the Pope, and a man in many ways worthy of respect, urging him to abandon the Epistles of S. Paul, lest their barbarous style should injure his own; and concludes, speaking of those sacred writings, "Let alone all that rubbish, unworthy of a serious man." And yet, merely as a question of literature, there is in the writings of S. Paul a simplicity, an energy, a life, a colour, a transparency of divine beauty, which we look for in vain in the ancient writers. Nor is this all. Bembo did not blush to introduce pagan superstitions into ecclesiastical language, in his anxiety not to forsake classic forms. He writes of S. Francis that he was received into heaven among the gods; and that a Christian, dying and contrite, had appeased the gods above and the gods below. To take the air and tone of the classic writers, it seemed to him a befitting thing to risk, or to set aside, the unity of God. But let us

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pass on to the second change which came over the life of thought in the sixteenth century.

While the most cultivated men of the sixteenth century seemed bent on paganizing the civilization of their times, a new air of intellectual independence breathed over all minds, and agitated them strangely. At first sight we might say a vital, a life-giving breath, but most certainly not altogether vital. In the first place, we must not suppose that reason had been a slave throughout the middle ages, as is now repeated with great boldness and no truth; nor that the nations of those ages lived, as children, on faith, on sentiment, on art. Certainly faith, and sentiment, and art had a large place in the civil life of the middle ages, especially under the sunny sky of Italy. We may rather say that they swayed it, guided it; but the torch of human reason was not therefore extinguished, nor did it burn feebly. S. Anselm, S. Thomas, S. Buonaventura, show a vigour of intellect beside which even Plato and Aristotle are weak, and winged their way freely through the loftiest speculations of philosophy.

Then, it is well to note that nowadays even unbelievers and misbelievers, if they be not of the common sort, recognize and acknowledge a mighty power of reasoning in the scholastic theology and in the mediæval universities. It is, however, unquestionable that in the sixteenth century began a fresh movement and a new expansion of the powers of the mind. The movement was no longer the movement of a reason in harmony with faith, and the expansion was not that of reason in itself, but of reason set in action and darkened by passions opposed to the ancient faith. This movement towards independence on the part of human reason became disorderly; it went on by bounds and

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leaps. It was partly good; but because it overpassed the limits of moderation and trespassed on the supernatural, it was bad; it opened abysses and threatened ruins. It resembled a river, which is beneficent while it waters and fertilizes the plain; but destructive, if its swollen torrent breaks its banks and pours itself over the cultivated fields. The limits of the natural and the supernatural, which had been long ago and most accurately marked out, were now strangely confused. It was no longer an application of the powers of reason to discover new relations between the objective truth and the mind which gazed on it, and thus to enlarge our true knowledge; it would now daringly criticize the truth itself, paring it down to the capacity and proportions of the thinker. Instead of fresh truths, found by new methods, for the increase of knowledge, men sought the strange and unusual, and thus the way of interminable wandering was thrown open.

As to the remaining change, the middle ages, with all their imperfections, had been admirably skilled in finding the harmonies that exist between faith and reason, between religion and civilization, between morals and law. There were indeed, even then, grave and frequent discussions between Christian nations. The manners of the barbarian invaders on one hand, and on the other the impetuosity of human passions, often brought Christian truths, which were generally accepted, into fierce conflict with individual and with social life. But the contradictions between man's faith and his life come, in great measure, from the contradiction which man bears always about in himself, and are only its reflexion; so that they will not entirely cease until the man is transfigured in the life hereafter. Now, in the sixteenth century, to this old and incurable contradiction was

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added another; or, rather, the contradiction itself made a step, a giant step, forward. It is not only the life agitated by passions that is in contradiction with the faith of the heart, but two ideas, contradictory and mutually destructive, have insinuated themselves into one and the same mind, and are trying to dwell together there in spite of this formal contradiction. The men of the sixteenth century do not cast off the faith of Jesus Christ, but they love and honour paganism; they profess themselves sons of Jesus, poor and humble of heart, and they extol the haughty virtues of heathendom, and pride themselves in them; they adore the Son of Mary ever Virgin, and yet glory in their own foul shame. Macchiavelli, for instance, who seems to many an inexplicable contradiction, raises the worst corruptions of his time into principles of political rule; yet he does not give up the profession of Christianity, but dies, as his son tells us, receiving the last sacraments as a devout Catholic. In a word, men had often been, even in past ages, pagans in their lives, and Christians in their habits of belief; in the sixteenth century they began to be pagans and even atheists in philosophy, and Christians in religion; pagans in literature and art, even while professing in regard of religion principles which formally contradict all paganism. Nay, they went still further, and began to teach that one and the same thing might be true in philosophy and false in theology; that is to say, that truth, which is of its very nature simple and one, might oppose and contradict itself. Even Leo X. shows us, in his life and in his excessive condescendence and indulgence towards the philosophers and literary men of his time, and in the few attempts he yet made towards a real reform of the Church, that twofold aspect of the six-

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teenth century which we must always bear in mind if we would read its history aright.

These three changes were at once the effect and the cause of a widespread corruption of life, and a mournful relaxation of discipline. The state of the Church became deplorable. Contemporary historians have left us a vivid picture of it; and although some may have made its shadows too dark, it is beyond doubt that the declension was great, and that those who were sick had no suspicion of their sickness. The human race, indeed, with some noble exceptions, was like a man sick to death, and who thinks himself stronger and better than ever; or like one whose mind is swept by some fierce storm of passion, while his body lies bound in paralysis, without strength enough even to feel its weakness.

But, thank God, He has made His Church fair, holy, and immaculate, even though many of her children be corrupt and perverse. There were not wanting then, never have there been wanting in the Church, wise and holy men to whose hearts this state of things was a bitter grief. Side by side with frightful immorality and enervated discipline was an earnest, eager desire that both should be reformed. But this yearning for reform did not touch the dogmas and the discipline appointed by Jesus Christ, which are in their very nature irreformable; it came from a charity that was gentle and humble, in everything submissive to the hierarchy of the Church, and above all to him who holds in it the place of Christ. I am not speaking of the earnest and saintly words with which, at an earlier time, the austere and gentle S. Bernard urged this holy reformation; nor will I do more than point to the daring and in some respects deplorable attempt at

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reform made by Savonarola, an attempt which failed because of the too eager impetuosity and ill-regulated zeal of the terrible friar, and because the corruption of the times was too great. Of this we shall have occasion to speak in the sequel. But it is important to remember how eager was this longing for a holy reform from the middle of the fifteenth century, precisely at the moment of the perilous transition from the middle ages to modern times. In the times of Eugenius IV., who died about the middle of that century, Cardinal Cesarini roused the soul of the Pontiff by showing him how very grave were the disorders of the Church, and how urgent the need of reform. "The immorality of the German clergy," he said, "excites the hatred of the people against the whole ecclesiastical order, and if it be not checked there is great reason to fear that the laity will rise against the clergy after the fashion of the Hussites, as they already threaten to do. . . . All are looking eagerly out for what is to come to pass, and everything forebodes a tragical ending. They no longer conceal their rancour against us. The little veneration for the priestly order which still remains will soon be quite gone; the blame will be cast on the court of Rome as the cause of all these evils." Then, in the tone of a prophet, he adds: "I see already the axe laid to the root of the tree; it bends, and instead of recovering itself as it still might, it crashes down to the ground . . . bodies will perish as well as souls. God takes from us the very power to see our perils, as He is wont to do when He would punish; the fire is kindled and we are casting ourselves into it." These terrible words show the state of the Church at that time. Although following Pontiffs turned their attention towards reforms, and although the Lateran Council, which was

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closed by Pope Leo just before the outbreak of the heresy of Luther, made various canons for the reform of discipline and of the morals of the clergy, it is nevertheless certain that the disorders of the Church were then most grave, not in Germany only, but in Italy, and in Rome itself. In the full splendour o letters and arts, while Rome was growing stately and beautiful in the hands of Bramante, Michelangelo, Raphael, and Giulio Romano; while Poliziano, Casa, Bembo, Mureto, and Manuzio, by their genius and their writings gave lustre to the Church and to Italy, in the very heart of Christendom there lay smouldering an appalling conflagration. The glory and the brilliance of the Pontificate of Leo X., following upon the terrible and daring exploits of Julius II., clothed Christendom with beauty, but not with that light which is its life and its prime adornment. As when a storm is about to burst, the sky is lurid and black, and here and there through the firmament keen lightnings quiver without crash of thunder, and an ominous uneasiness comes upon all living things, so was it then in the Church of God. The heresy of Luther burst forth like a hurricane, rending the unity of the Church, and kindling a fire which still burns on in our own day. The disaster seemed unexpected, and yet was not so; for the dark, heavy vapours from which the storm burst forth had been long gathering over Christendom.

The Protestant reformation may be looked at in various lights. As a heresy in theology, it was not only petty and sophistical, as other heresies are; it was much more so than they had been. While, however, previous heresies had sprung from the transferring into the supernatural order some principle, whether true or false, of the natural order, and in particular of what

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was called philosophy, the Protestant heresy had quite other roots.

Though Luther did not lack ability, or learning, or a sort of eloquence, the new dogmas of his reform did not flow naturally from any new system either of theology or of philosophy. They had their origin in impulsive attacks, in rancours, in overweening pride, and so were incoherent and variable. The mere changes introduced by Luther into his theology in two years are alone enough to prove it false, even though we take no account of the further countless changes made by Calvin, Zwingli, and others. Had the Protestant reformation come before the world merely as a reform in theology, it would have had only a few straggling followers, and would not have cast deep roots into the mind of Europe.

The real forces of the reformation, the forces which alone were to be feared, were, in my opinion, very far different. Its first force was that it so fully answered to the wretched condition and the passions of the time, and was indeed only their natural outcome and fruit. This gave it immense strength. It reflected its times, it did not correct them. It reformed neither morals nor discipline. It enlarged and inflamed the wounds of society; it transferred the reformation from discipline, where it was needed, to dogmas where every attempt at change must in the end lead to the denial of the central essence of Christianity. Of all the passions then dominant, it stimulated most keenly the craving for wealth; and the reformation owed its rapid diffusion mainly to the spoils granted to princes and nobles from the many possessions of the Church and of monasteries. And thus Protestantism was in its very beginning a social heresy, and cast into

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society those germs of communism of which we are now feeling the dire effect.

Moreover, it would be easy to show that Protestantism had relations quite visible enough with the new paganism of the sixteenth century, and with the breach that was being made between religion and civilization. But this would lead us too far. What is of more real importance is the evident connexion between it and that new movement of the human reason towards a fancied independence, of which we trace indications as early as the middle of the fifteenth century, and which had from that time been going on irregularly and intermittently. And indeed, cultivated men of our own day, if they are not Catholics in mind and heart, look at Protestantism under this aspect alone. They laud it, and proclaim it not only a fresh step along the way of human perfection, but as one of the greatest and most precious acquisitions made by mankind. And thus many who believe neither the dogmas which Protestantism holds in common with us, nor those in which it departs from us, are still unwearied in their praise of the reformation. But in regard of this new movement towards the independence of the human reason, I wish my readers to understand my meaning fully and clearly.

A new movement towards independence of thought had begun long before Protestantism, as a natural consequence of the altered condition of the times, of the new direction thought had taken, and of the fresh expansion of intellectual energy which had followed. To stay this movement was impossible, and, even if possible, would have been wicked and injurious. To control it and keep it in harmony with Christianity was the duty of every good Christian, and of those

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especially who bear authority in the Church, and whom Jesus Christ appointed to be the salt of the earth, the lights of the world. We shall see presently what the Church did, and especially what the Popes did, to attain this end; it was not little, though unbelievers feign, as is their wont, to ignore it. But what did the haughty reformer Luther to gain this end? He accepted the independence of reason, but in accepting it he sacrilegiously transferred it from the natural order to the supernatural. In the natural order, and within its own limits, this independence might confer, and did confer, immense benefits on the Church, on civilization, and on modern society. No one denies this. But would it not have done this, and done it better, if it had been restrained within its own limits? By overstepping them it brought with it confusion and ruin. Cannot human reason have a just and equitable independence in human sciences, without being independent and supreme in those which are divine? Who will maintain that in order to its freedom in things which have to do with the finite, it must be either absolutely or equally free in the sciences which have to do with the Infinite? Who can prove that the minute and ever active analysis which has broken up the visible world into fragments, and thus enriched the natural sciences, and bestowed on our civilization so many blessings in the natural order, is not possible unless it can be employed by every one on religion, on its several doctrines, on every word of the Bible which is its foundation? Can I not investigate any fact in chemistry or astronomy, unless I am free to demand the reason and ground of all the deep mysteries of God—of those mysteries which my mind knows, not by their own light, but by the reflected

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light of the Word of God? What a confusion between orders of truth so diverse! What a strange mingling of religion and science! In a word, without Luther, we should have had in their time Galileo, Leibnitz, Newton, and Kepler, and all the other great masters in natural science; and we should have escaped many of the moral and social losses our civilization has sustained from the abuse of analysis.

I know that there is now current in the world a kind of philosophy of history which does away with the distinction between good and evil, and regards right and wrong, truth and error, as equally necessary to human progress. But this philosophy is false and destructive, and I venture to deny it; it is reckless and cruel, and I reject it. I think that those good things which, under the Providence of God, come occasionally through evil ways, would be attained more perfectly and more speedily by the way of good. If man does not always move towards his end by the highway of good, it is because God treats with infinite respect the liberty He has intrusted to man, and would rather bring evil out of good than by His almightiness prevent all evil. The effect of good which sometimes follows evil shows that there is not on earth anything simply and merely evil, without some admixture, however small, of good. Hence it is that in evil itself the high overruling wisdom of God seeks and finds the germ of future good. In all history evil seems to me as a winding, round-about way, which lengthens the journey, and leads us continually away from our goal, without preventing us from reaching it in the end; because God is in the beginning, the middle, and the end of the way, and He leads mankind on to its high destiny while veiling His working beneath the free-will of men.

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General considerations of this kind, applied to the particular fact of Protestantism, convince me that it was not, as some suppose, an historical necessity. It arose rather, as all human events arise, from the free-will and the passions of men; and this even though it be granted that the conditions of the time were a mighty incentive and an ill-omened occasion for determining the free-will of man in this direction rather than in another.

If we turn from the *religious* Protestantism of the sixteenth century to the *social* Protestantism of our own day, which calls itself *the revolution*, we find that the one reflects the image of the other, and we may apply to this latter all we have said in denying the historical necessity of the former. The revival of paganism, the undue independence of reason, and the separation of civil life from religion, are manifestly the animating life of social as of religious Protestantism. From the beginning of this century these principles are summed up in one formula, the separation of the Church from the State, which is the last and most concrete form of the separation of religion from civilization, of things divine from things human. And, moreover, this social or civil Protestantism, like the religious Protestantism, arose from the free-will and the passions of men, and has no necessary connexion with the advance and perfection of civilization.

But, although the Protestant reformation of the sixteenth century was not in any way necessary to the historical development of Christianity or of civilization, yet, when it came, the wise Providence of God made it subserve both. It was the will of God that that reformation, which of itself only enlarged and inflamed the wounds of Christendom, should be both the incentive

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and the occasion for a holy and true reformation of morals and of discipline. The idea of reform which before Luther haunted individual hearts here and there, becomes after Luther universal and practical throughout the Church. And so the sixteenth century, in which Protestantism sprang up and grew strong, shows us a true and holy and complete reformation of the Church by the Church herself. The Council of Trent and its canons of reformation, the Popes with their zeal and their authority, saints with the constraining might of their example and the unction of their words, concurred marvellously to effect the needed and desired reform; and if they did not altogether succeed, the fault must be laid in part to the difficulties of a new era, and to the corruption of man, who can harden himself against the mightiest efforts, and change into poison the most salutary remedies. And if the schism severed from the Church a very noble part of Europe, the decrees of Trent healed what remained; so that, all things considered, the gain was greater than the loss.

Now, in this design of the most merciful Providence of God to draw from the evil of Protestantism the motive and the occasion of reform, the saints of that time had one of the principal parts, though they had not perhaps a full consciousness of this. S. Teresa, S. Catherine of Genoa, S. Cajetan, S. Ignatius Loyola, S. Francis Xavier, S. Philip Neri, S. Charles, S. Camillus, S. John of God, S. Peter of Alcantara, and then, towards the close of the century, S. Francis of Sales and S. Vincent of Paul, were the chosen souls who, each in his own measure and way, aided in the reformation of the Church of God. And truly the history of the Church is a wonderful and a holy record. No century had been more disastrous, more stormy, than the

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sixteenth; in none had so many of her children been torn from the bleeding bosom of the Church; in none had she to weep so bitterly over the nations of the earth paganized and in rebellion; and yet, if we look at the saints who then flourished, none perhaps had been so prolific. It is a sufficient defence of the Church to compare and contrast these saints with the leaders of the schism.

In this wise and merciful mystery of Providence, which brings all the saints of the sixteenth century into relations so important with the great and terrible fact of Protestantism, there are two who shine forth with a surpassing brilliance. Their lives seem interwoven with the first steps of the revolt in order that they might attenuate its disastrous effects. One was a Spaniard, the other a Florentine; they were born about the same time, and bound together by such friendship as only saints can know—Ignatius Loyola and Philip Neri. Of the one I can speak only in passing, the other is the subject of my book.

S. Ignatius and S. Philip stood both, it seems to me, in peculiar relations with the Protestant reformation, and answered to two great wants of the sixteenth century. The Protestant heresy had unfortunately arisen, and thoughtful men foresaw that it would cast deep and strong roots; it was a prime necessity to arm for the fight, and to fight with vigour. To this struggle, though by no means to this struggle alone, S. Ignatius and the Society of Jesus addressed themselves. God, who prepares and uses all for the good of the Church, willed that S. Ignatius should be born and should serve as a soldier under the Spanish monarchy, then one of the most warlike and valiant, that he might, for the Church's weal, transfuse into the spiritual

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order the thoughts, the feelings, the vigour, the courage of a soldier. Under divine grace he found in the life of camps, in warfare, in the struggles of conflicting factions, in the very form of the Spanish monarchy, the discipline, the unity, the warlike energy which he has stamped as characteristics on his society. It is wonderful to note how he selected, corrected, perfected, and adapted to the service of the Church the qualities and habits which make a perfect soldier. None can gainsay the claim of his society to have combated the Protestant heresy with a sagacity and a vigour above all praise; and this is perhaps the brightest, fairest glory of the illustrious society of the Jesuits; were there none other this would be enough. Philip Neri moved in a different path. Of mild and gentle ways, born in beautiful Florence, amidst the splendour of arts, and of language in its perfection of form, brought up in a land in which the simple and Christian life of the lesser cities of the middle ages was held especially dear and in honour, he too strove to heal that fearful wound of immorality and decay of discipline which had furnished pretext and occasion to the schism. Nor was there lacking to Philip a holy daring in thought and deed; for where this daring is not, the fruits of holiness are few and poor; but his daring was of a different kind from that of the saintly founder of the Jesuits, and directed to a different end. To reform the Church without seeming to be trying to reform it, he went boldly to the heart and centre of Christendom, and was at last hailed the new apostle of Rome. Aiming at the welfare of Christendom, he laid his finger on the real wound, and devoted himself, with prudence indeed, but with great boldness, to correct the clergy. He made little or no show of reforming, but he quietly

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reformed, in ways altogether new, singular, and unobtrusive. He was especially admirable in this, that he never spoke of the reformation he effected with such ardour of gentlest charity, so that we may doubt whether he ever knew its extent. Nor does this derogate from his sanctity, or lessen his pre-eminent virtue. God enlightens His saints, guides them, transfigures them, so that they do far more and far better than they know. Very often the saints have had no perception of the good they have done, and their humility has but contributed towards the perfection of their work. It emptied them of self, filled them with God, led them out of themselves that they might live and work for God alone. It is well to note this, because in the course of this sketch it may seem to some that Philip did not propose to himself to be the reformer he really was.

But while I thus connect Philip with the Protestant schism, and show him to have been a holy and wise reformer, I do not intend to lose sight of the figure of the saint himself and of his familiar life, all aglow with the most tender charity. It will be my effort to study and present in all its aspects the great and beautiful soul of S. Philip, because I wish to set forth the man in his completeness; and because the hidden mysteries of a holy soul, and the actions, often in appearance trivial, which flow from them, are not less worthy of study and of love than those great public acts which affect the general condition of the Church and of society. In this interweaving and harmony of the two lives, the private and the public, the one the intrinsic light and the other its reflexion, lies the greatest charm of the lives of the saints. Now in each of these aspects S. Philip is singularly beautiful. It is grand to see in him the wise

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reformer of his generation; it is grand too to look at him alone and apart, abstracted as it were from all considerations of place and time. He who was the great reformer of his time was a saint of a beauty very rarely approached since. Gentle in appearance, and in manner gentle; gentle in looks, in words, in everything; revealing in the expression of his face the beautiful poetry of his soul; humble in his attire; in appearance or in reality eccentric at times, but in his eccentricities always a saint; noted especially for a sort of heavenly gladness of heart which never left him in sufferings or in contradictions, glowing with a love of God and of his neighbour so intense that he seemed at times beside himself with love; such was S. Philip. If on the one hand he reminds us of S. Peter and S. Paul by his title of Apostle of Rome, on the other hand he resembles, in himself and in his mode of working, S. John, to whom he was naturally most devout. He seems to me to have in common with S. John his virginal purity, the ineffable suavity of his nature, the poetry and the gentle ardours of his love. Had Philip lived in Judea in the time of Jesus Christ, I can reverently imagine that Jesus might have allowed him too to rest his head on His sacred Heart. This may suffice for the sketch of a saint, which I hope to clothe by degrees with colour in the course of my book.

And now it remains only that I should say a few words on my intention in writing, and on the difficulties which presented themselves to my mind when I applied myself to my grateful task. There are already several lives of S. Philip, and of some of them many editions. The principal are those of Gallonio and of Bacci, both Oratorians, the former a contemporary of

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the saint, the latter of the generation next following. Both were men of rare virtue, and their books show the most tender piety, together with an eager desire to relate exactly and fully the actions, the virtues, and especially the miracles of the saint. Gallonio, who wrote only six years after S. Philip's death, writes briefly, in the form of annals, telling us what he had seen, or what he had gathered from more than three hundred eyewitnesses. He wrote his life in Latin, and he himself translated it into Italian a year after. Bacci wrote twenty-two years later, and had in his hands the processes of the canonization of the saint, which he studied with great diligence and care. He wrote on a method which was then becoming prevalent, separating the actions of the saint from his virtues, and these again from his supernatural gifts, which were accurately subdivided and classed. His work was thus much fuller, though injured somewhat by this analytical method. It was revised and corrected by himself six several times, and is most praiseworthy for its simplicity, the gracefulness and clearness of its narration, and above all for the ineffable spiritual light which clothes it like a bloom. These are the two sources from which subsequent writers of the life of S. Philip have drawn; nor have they added anything new. Not to mention abridgments of these, the chief writers on S. Philip are the Dominican F. Louis Bertrand, F. Antonio Vasquez of the Clerks Minor, Miguel Antonio Frames of Urrotigoyti, and F. Rosweyd of the Society of Jesus:—four lives, the first in Castilian, the two following in Spanish, and the last in Flemish. Then came F. Bernabei of the Roman Oratory, who wrote in Latin a life which was inserted in the Bollandists, together with that by Gallonio. All this was done

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within seventy years of the saint's death. But in 1670, when the twelfth edition of Bacci's life was published in Rome, the press was corrected by F. Ricci, the Dominican, who in order, as he says, to give it the last touch of perfection, made several changes in it, and enriched it with the Lives of the Companions of the Saint. His changes were not all equally felicitous, and the additions are neither so well arranged nor so sure as might be desired; but it certainly has many excellences, and has been more frequently reprinted than any other. In 1693 F. Marciano, of our Naples Oratory, wrote a new life of S. Philip; and in 1727 appeared a much larger life by F. Sonzonio of Venice. Then for many years there came no new lives, but towards the end of the century appeared a sketch or eulogy of the saint worthy of notice for the sake of the writer. Goethe, while staying in Rome, found the memory of S. Philip so living, that he could not resist the attraction to study his life. The saint seemed to him so marvellously great that he drew a sketch of him which would be beautiful, were it not for the constant effort to deprive Philip of all supernatural light of gifts and miracles; but his poetic soul was often singularly felicitous in the hues with which he clothes the figure of the saint. Anyhow, such a eulogy, by such a man, is a witness to the grandeur of S. Philip which should not be left without record.

In 1794 a father of the Oratory of Venice, in reprinting Bacci's life, made some omissions and some additions. This life, which seems to me the best of all, was afterwards reprinted at Florence in 1851, and again at Pisa in 1874. This is the life I use, without neglecting any other I have been able to get. Where I do not give particular references, my text is that of

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Bacci in this Pisa edition, and I sometimes make use of Gallonio. I hope, too, that I may succeed in making some additions and a few corrections, all which I shall note in their place.

Still, I have not mentioned the principal reasons which have induced me to write another life of S. Philip. One is, that it seems to me, in the moral state of our times, expedient and desirable to recall attention to his character and work, and the rather if it be granted me to add even one ray of light to that which already invests him. What I have said of the points of resemblance between the sixteenth century and our own will make this appear more opportune. In our time the one hope of bringing society back into the path of good, and infusing into it a new life, is the reviving and strengthening in men's minds the Catholic faith, and the Catholic law of morals. But we shall look in vain for this renewal of strength, unless we seek it from the centre and heart of Christendom, the Chair of Peter. Now S. Philip not only grasped this great truth, he was its apostle. He came to Rome in early youth, without any apparent motive and plan. From Rome he drew his surpassing virtue; in Rome he lived, wrought miracles, effected reforms, under the shadow of the Papal chair. It would seem as if he had no thought or care for the rest of Christendom; but in truth he saw all Christendom there in Rome, as the physician sees all life in the heart. Amidst the darkness and the woe, light and healing, S. Philip thought, must come from Rome and the Pope. He never left Rome again, not even to gratify the eager desire of saints, his friends. He revered and loved the Papacy with an ardour of unusual vehemence. When the Pope was made the butt of wrath and insult,

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contumely and scorn, Philip deepened the expression of that impassioned and filial love with which the saints have always regarded the Holy See, and him who holds the place of Christ. In his yearning desire of a reformation, he followed the steps and extended the work of the reforming Popes of his day; and if at any time he anticipated them, he did it with unrivalled reverence and humility. As a secular, in instituting his Congregation, in the persecutions he endured, in all the detail of his apostolic life, he was most obedient, even in the smallest things, to the Pope; and this, though it was not his wont to bow down before any merely human grandeur. In a word, the work of S. Philip, the place where he did it, his demeanour towards successive Popes, may, I think, be remembered by us with advantage in the peculiar condition of the Church and of society in this our time.

Another reason why I write is, that I propose to make a book, not better indeed, but different from those of my predecessors. I think such a book may be useful to my readers; certainly it is a great blessing to myself to study more accurately and ponder more deeply the bright and beautiful saint to whom I have given the love of my heart. I say useful to my readers, because the intellectual and moral condition of Catholics has changed much in three centuries; and the light of religion, ever in itself one and the same, should shine on their minds and reach their hearts in other ways. There are many who delight in the old style, and they will read Bacci still, and they cannot read him without great profit. Those again who, even in the lives of the saints, seek something more in keeping with the religious, social, and literary conditions of the time, will look with indulgence on this attempt to do the utmost

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good I can. I do not think it necessary to point out what I take to be the way in which the lives of the saints may be now with greatest advantage written; my readers will judge for themselves. This life of S. Philip differs from others in two points especially: the one is, that I have yielded to the strongly expressed wishes of many friends, some of them of great authority, that I should exhibit S. Philip in his relations to the time in which he lived, and to the great men by whom he was surrounded; the other is that I have tried to enter more fully than has yet been done into the soul of S. Philip, and to set forth its natural beauty as well as its supernatural, and the exquisite blending and harmony of nature and of grace in it.

Both these attempts are difficult. The biographers of the saint have not written of his relations with the age in which he lived, partly from the taste and the requirements of their time, and partly because those relations are not to be gathered from visible and great facts, but were for the most part secret and hidden. Nor have I the resource of the writings of S. Philip; he wrote little, and in his rare humility he destroyed what he had written. Thus I have not the great advantage I had in writing the lives of S. Catherine of Siena and S. Peter Damian; I have to trace out carefully, by way of inference and induction, the relations of S. Philip to the sixteenth century. Now, in a history, it is the orderly tissue of facts that is of primary value, and gives it its life; reasonings and deductions seem out of place. And then, how can we discover the natural graces of the soul of S. Philip? what light will guide us in seeking them? His biographers say nothing of them, and we have no written record of them. I mention these difficulties to bespeak for my book the

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kindly indulgence which has been always so liberally accorded me. In this book I shall speak, as is my wont, from my heart, for the love and the glory of God. The saint of whom I write is separated from me by a long space of years, and my eyes cannot delight themselves with his presence. But my heart seeks a refuge and a rest among those blessed spirits with whom alone is peace, and abundance of peace. There it lovingly clings to the soul of the saint who has been all along its guide and its consolation, from whom it has learned to set the love of God and of His Church above all other love. And if the beauty of that soul, gleaming now with the light of glory, withdraw us for a time from the miseries of this earthly life, and increase our desire for the sweetness of the life to come, I shall thank and bless God. And I shall bless Him with still greater thankfulness, if it be granted me to infuse into the hearts of my readers some portion of the feelings which have prompted me to undertake the life I shall now relate.

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THE LIFE OF S. PHILIP NERI.

BOOK I.

S. PHILIP IN THE WORLD.

CHAPTER I.

1515–1532.

THE year 1515 has an especial importance in the history of the Church, because it marks the birth of Teresa de Cepeda in Avila, and of Philip Neri in Florence; two saints who have shed lustre on the Church in different ways, but who were nevertheless singularly alike in the rare and almost miraculous vehemence of their charity.

And this same year is memorable also in Florentine history for quite other reasons. In 1515 Florence welcomed within its walls Pope Leo X., who, by his kingly grandeur of soul, and his munificent patronage of genius, letters, and art, stamped his name upon his times. The greatness of Leo X. and that of Philip Neri have nothing in common; and I speak of the magnificent entry of the Pope into Florence only because it will help us to know the aspect and life of Florence in the year in which Philip was born in it.

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When Pope Leo left Rome to revisit the home of his fathers, there remained in Florence only a shadow of the free and christian institutions which had been its glory. The antique republic, which would have no king because its King was Jesus Christ, had disappeared with the death of Savonarola a few years before; nor could the conspiracies of Capponi and Boscoli, in 1513, bring it back again. There was set up in Florence what Capponi calls "a lying government, in appearance a republic, in fact a princedom." The Medici were at that time Lords of Florence, and were extending their power in all parts of Italy. Julian dei Medici, brother of the Pope, was ruler of the city; Julius was its archbishop; and high above them all, in the dignity and splendour of the tiara, rose the youthful and magnificent Pope of the family of the Medici, Leo X.

As soon as the coming of the Pope was known, the Florentines resolved to rival and surpass whatever had been done in times past to welcome their greatest benefactors. They threw down the gates of the city, and a part of the walls. The Pontiff was to enter by the gate of S. Pier Gattolini; and there was erected a triumphal arch, storied over with exquisite sculptures by Jacopo di Sandro and Baccio di Monte Lupo. In the piazza of S. Felice, Julian del Tasso raised another arch, adorned with a statue of Lorenzo the Magnificent, father of the Pope, with a legend of startling irreverence: "*This is my beloved Son.*" At Santa Trinità was a bust of Romulus, surrounded with other noble statues. Antonio of S. Gallo and Baccio Bandinelli, men of renown in the history of art, raised, the one an octagonal temple in the piazza della Signoria, and the other in the Logge a colossal statue of Hercules. There were other triumphal arches by men of repute, with

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magnificent horses in imitation of those of the Quirinal, and ten nymphs who were singing. But what excited the Pope's especial admiration was the temporary façade of the beautiful cathedral of S. Maria del Fiore, which was deemed worthy to stand beside the campanile of Giotto and the cupola of Brunelleschi. It was designed by Sansovino, who adorned it with statues and bas-reliefs, and Andrea del Sarto enriched it with historical paintings. Such were the preparations made to receive the Pope. The entrance of Leo into the city was befittingly magnificent and stately. He was attended by all the dignitaries of his court, by ambassadors, princes, cardinals; by a hundred youths of the noble Florentine families, by the magistrates of the city, the chamberlains, the pontifical physicians and secretaries, all in rich and costly array; and as he entered S. Maria del Fiore, he was met by the canons, bearing the Blessed Sacrament. There Leo remained a long time in prayer, and then was conducted to the Convent of S. Maria Novella to rest. One sorrow darkened the brightness of the day; his brother Julian lay sick of a painful and hopeless disease. These things took place in the closing days of November 1515, less than two years before the conflagration of the Lutheran heresy burst forth. There was then no presentiment of the coming evil upon the soul of the light-hearted Pope.

In this same year 1515 there lived in the parish of S. Pier Gattolini a family called Neri, who had come from Castelfranco in the valley of the Arno, and had been long established in Florence. According to the custom of the time, they had taken the surname of Neri from Ranieri, the first founder of the family. They lived but poorly and were little known, yet the

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family was noble in the then received meaning of the word in Tuscany. The Florentines were not wont to use pompous territorial titles. They were esteemed noble who practised what were called the greater professions or *arti* of the republic; and these families alone were enrolled amongst the Tuscan nobility when the government passed into a princedom. Now it is certain that the ancestors of the Neri of Castelfranco had exercised these professions, held these offices, and are found married to noble ladies. The grandfather of our saint, whose name too was Philip, had a large place of business in the Mercato Nuovo, and married Antonia Landi, a lady of noble extraction. On her death he married Benedetta dei Lenzi Corazzei, and was thus allied with those Corazzei who about the year 1400 held again and again the office of priors in the republic.[1] The family is not now found amongst the nobles of Tuscany, because it was extinguished with the death of our S. Philip, who has left instead a new and spiritual posterity; with him the Neri ended and the *Filippini* began. His only brother Antonio died in his childhood. We may note in passing that this Antonio was not older than our saint, as Gallonio and Bacci thought. His certificate of baptism shows that he was born five years after S. Philip, when the family had removed into the parish of S. Maria della Costa.[2]

In the early part of 1515 we find Ser Francesco

[1] Brocchi, in his *Vite dei Santi e Beati Fiorentini*, 1742, says of the Lenzi-Corazzei: "A noble Florentine family, from which sprung the royal family Lenzisch, called in Poland Leczinsky, and amongst whose descendants are King Stanislaus and his daughter Maria, queen of France. Such is the common tradition in Florence."

[2] Antonio was born on the 8th September 1520, as appears from the register of baptisms. "Antonio Romolo, son of Ser Francesco di Filippo di Castelfranco, of the parish of S. George, born 8th September 1520, and baptized on Monday the 10th."

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still childless. In April 1513[1] he had married Lucrezia da Mosciano, and not Lucrezia Soldi, as the earlier biographers of the saint wrote in error; a Soldi was the mother of Lucrezia. The name is written clearly in the marriage deed of Ser Francesco, and also in the pedigree of the Neris published by Brocchi. From this pedigree we learn, moreover, that Ser Francesco was not married a second time. Lucrezia brought with her a dowry of fifty florins, and the half of a small landed property at Montespertoli. She was not only a noble lady in the Tuscan acceptation of the word, but her family was descended from the ancient race of the Giachini del Becco, Counts of S. Donnino in Garfagnana.

Her husband, Ser Francesco, was the son of Ser Filippo by his first marriage. He had a little property, but not enough to live on; and he therefore practised as a notary, and was thus classed with those exercising the greater professions or *arti*. All speak of him as a man noted for honour, integrity, and piety. Gallonio says that he was in all respects excellent; and Bacci adds that he and his family were great friends to the religious orders, and especially to the Dominicans. From this circumstance we may conjecture that in the great religious conflict which had so recently agitated Florence, the Neri had taken part with Savonarola; and this conjecture is strengthened by the fact that our saint showed great affection to the friars of S. Mark, and held in much honour the memory of the austere and impetuous reformer. The learned Dominican Manni, of Florence, in his Notes

[1] Brocchi in his life of S. Philip (*Vite dei Santi e Beati Fiorentini*) gives this as the date of the marriage. Brocchi is a very painstaking and accurate writer, and his book is now very rare.

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on the Life of S. Philip, records several things which show how exact and even scrupulous was Ser Francesco in his duties as a notary.

The 21st of July, the feast of S. Praxedes, in the year 1515 fell on a Saturday. Six hours after nightfall, according to the calculation then in use, or as we should say, about two o'clock in the morning of Sunday, the feast of S. Mary Magdalen, Lucrezia Neri gave birth to a son, who was destined to be the gladness and the honour, not of his own name alone, but of the universal Church. That same morning he was taken to the Baptistery of S. Giovanni, and received in the sacrament by which the Church made him her son the names of two saints: Philip and Romolo.[1] Both these were family names, borne by venerated ancestors, and keeping up family traditions. And thus from the very birth of a child the Church and the family unite to place him under the guardianship of some beloved saints, who keep his steps in the way of life; and blessed is he who, like Philip Neri, loves and imitates the saint whose name he bears! Philip was born in the parish of S. Pier Gattolini, but in Florence there is only one font of baptism, in the stately Baptistery of S. Giovanni, adjoining the cathedral.[2] As if Florence would symbolize and express the accord between re-

[1] At that time it was very common to add the name Romolo to the principal Christian name, in honour of S. Romolo, who was believed to have been one of the first preachers of the gospel in those parts of Tuscany. The Acts on which this belief rested are now regarded as apocryphal; but it is morally certain that S. Romolo, Bishop and Protector of Fiesole, flourished about the fourth century.

[2] In the register of the Baptistery the baptism of S. Philip is thus recorded:—*Filippo e Romolo di Ser Francesco di Filippo da Castel Franco, popolo San Pier Gattolini, nato a dì* 21 *luglio* 1515, *a ore* 6. In the margin are these words in a different hand: "Died 26 May 1595, at six o'clock, and the 12th day of March, 1621 years from the Incarnation (new style 1622), was by Gregory XV. canonized saint."

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ligion and the arts, her children must pass, to draw the first breath of the soul's life, through those gates which Michelangelo pronounced worthy to be the gates of paradise, under the shadow of Giotto's campanile and Brunelleschi's cupola, each of its kind the noblest and most graceful in the world.

Philip was a fine child, in perfect health, and of singular beauty. The tradition in Florence is that his mother was unable, probably from infirm health, to suckle him, and the house in which his nurse lived is still pointed out with tender reverence. In going from the Pitti Palace towards Santo Spirito, just as we enter the parish of S. Felice, there is a house in the Via Mazzetta, at the corner of the Via del Gelsomino. On the outer wall of that house, on the side facing the campanile of S. Felice, is an ancient fresco of S. Philip, recording the common tradition that there our saint was placed at nurse. The Florentines, who have always cherished with affectionate veneration the memory of their great men, gave to this fresco a frame of costly marble in 1838, and engraved on it an inscription composed by Mgr. Francesco Grazzini, which runs as follows :—

PHILIP NERI, OUR PATRON IN HEAVEN,
WAS PLACED AS AN INFANT
AT NURSE IN THIS HOUSE,
AND THUS CONFERRED ON THE LOWLY SPOT
AN IMPERISHABLE GLORY.

But no tradition can point with certainty to the house in which S. Philip was born; the Florentines have made many efforts to discover it, but in vain. Some feel sure that it stood in the Via Chiara, or in that neighbourhood. Brocchi, however, says that it has been incorporated with the Convent of the Convertite,

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where there is still a well which is called S. Philip's well; and this seems confirmed by the words of a Florentine in the process of the saint's canonization. These are indeed but faint vestiges, but not without their interest.

As time went on the infant grew into childhood, with all that bright transparency of soul which makes childhood so attractive and loveable. And Philip's boyhood was very beautiful, as it is described by contemporary biographers. They tell us that he was well proportioned and comely in person, of bright and clear genius, peaceful in character, and irresistibly winning.[1] And the beauty of these gifts was enhanced in Philip by the light of grace, brighter far than that which brightens the soul of every baptized child. In Philip this heavenly light was a splendour, not such as clothes the perfect saint, but such as befits a saintly child. And, as not unfrequently happens in the saints, this splendour was visible to many, and endeared him to his sisters, his friends and companions, and especially to his parents. He began life by drawing others to him with a singular love before he had reached the age of reason, and his whole life was a drawing the souls of men to himself by love.

This beauty of holiness showed itself in Philip by a heavenly modesty remarked by all his biographers, and this is always the surest indication of the intrinsic beauty of a soul. It shone brightly, too, in a love of God so deep and living as to be altogether unusual, at so early an age. In boyhood the soul does not soar

[1] In a writing of the seventeenth century I find the genius of Philip ranked with that of Pico della Mirandola, and that, moreover, he had a prodigious memory; but there is probably an affectionate exaggeration in these statements. The writer is Manfredi Tarentino, *Miscellanea*, cap. xxiii.

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towards the infinite, the divine and eternal, or its flight is weak and uncertain. As we see birds which have just left their nest look up into the sky, and flutter their wings in timid flight, and then sink back powerless and wearied, so is it with the souls of children. They are vivified and warmed by the breath of grace, but they do not readily rise towards God; they live in themselves and in what immediately surrounds them, happy and at peace. And so, though there may be an exquisite bloom of innocence, and a vague indeterminate yearning towards God, the living habitual thought of God, and a glowing love of Him, strike us as, at that early period of life, unusual and marvellous. In the best children piety puts on a childish form, and is sometimes almost blended with their amusements. But far other was the boyhood of Philip. He loved God, and lived on the thought of God. His great piety, his continual prayers, the fervent delight he took in reciting the Psalms, his wish to conceal his fervour from others, all reveal to us a soul really fixed on heavenly things, and loving them with all its powers. And God condescended with an infinite love to the love of this blessed child; or rather it was God who shed into the heart of Philip that tender love, and who lavished on the child of His love His tenderness and His protection.

One day, when Philip was between eight and nine years old, his parents took him with them to Castelfranco in the valley of the Arno, and left him in the court of the house to amuse himself. Seeing an ass laden with fruit, he wanted to ride on it, and mounted it accordingly. Ere long, from some cause or other, both the ass and its rider fell into a deep cellar. The child fell underneath, and was so completely hidden by the ass that a woman, who ran eagerly to the spot, saw

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nothing of him but one arm, and thought him crushed and lifeless. Her cries summoned Philip's parents, who gave him up for dead, and wept bitterly. They extricated the child with some difficulty, and found to their wonder that he was quite safe and sound. God had marvellously protected him in this great peril, and throughout his long life Philip never forgot that day. He looked on his preservation as a mark of the tender love of God, and was unceasing in praise and thanksgiving.

Meanwhile the conscience of the holy child, illuminated and rendered ever watchful by the love of God, became so pure, so delicate, so prompt in discerning evil from good, that the slightest disorder or defect grieved him, excited him, seemed to him a sin. And the very shadow of sin was enough to fill Philip's heart with bitter grief, and move him to tears. And moreover, in the mirror of a conscience luminous and clear in the light of God, Philip began to see another order of ideas and of objects which other boys do not see; and this sight drew him nearer to God, expanded his heart, and filled it with all holy affections.

What is said of his conduct at home is a reflexion of what he thought and felt. He had, as we have said, a younger brother called Antonio who died in early childhood, and two sisters who were about six or seven years younger than himself.[1] Thus Philip was not alone at home; and yet in the eighteen years and more he lived in his family, there is no mention of his having ever disobeyed his father or mother, or caused the least

[1] Brocchi, in his notes on S. Philip's family, gives September 8, 1520, for the birth of Antonio. After him he names the two sisters of the saint, Catherine and Elizabeth, but without the date of their birth. As we find Catherine married in 1539, we may conclude that she was born not later than 1522.

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sorrow to any one. If his father or mother, says Gallonio, bade him stay in one place, he stayed there; if they bade him do this or that, he did it readily and at once. Never was there discord between the will of Philip and that of his parents. Yet, when we reflect what childhood is, and how different are the wishes of the young from those of the old, we feel that nothing but an unusual virtue of obedience could have produced this perfect harmony of will. Hence there was great peace in that home, a pure and serene air cheered and gladdened that Christian household; and hence that self-restraint and composed gentleness of words and ways which rendered it so dear to all its members. Once only we read of a little cloud which passed over the serene sky. When Philip was about twelve years old he was reproved by his father for having given a slight push to his sister Catherine, because she persisted in disturbing him while he was reciting some psalms with his sister Elizabeth. Philip's sorrow for this fault, if fault it can be called, was profound, and he bewailed it bitterly.

Such was the boyhood of Philip, and I love to picture him to myself as he stood on the threshold of youth. He was then comely and well-proportioned, sprightly, joyous, eager, and self-restrained; with a gentle sweetness of look and bearing and speech. His forehead was lofty and ample; his eyes were small and blue, so expressive and penetrating that neither then nor subsequently could any painter adequately render them; his complexion was exceedingly fair and delicate. To have an idea of him we should study the portrait of him by Baroccio, now in the Doria gallery in Rome; there we see him as a boy of rare beauty and modesty, and with eyes as of paradise. He was

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not dressed in the new fashion which foreigners were at that time introducing into Tuscany, and which was eagerly adopted by lovers of change; he wore the old republican hood or cowl with its long stripe to be wound round the neck; and this hood was never taken off but to the Gonfaloniere of justice, or to prelates of highest dignity. The other parts of his dress were simple and very clean. But, what is of greater importance, no one, says Gallonio, had ever surprised in him the faintest movement of anger; he was affable with his equals, and full of loving sympathy with his inferiors. The light of grace and of divine love shone upon his whole person, but especially in the modest vivacity of his look and the ineffable smile on his lips. He was still but a boy; but he was already known far beyond his home and the circle of his relations. That rare beauty of soul, however closely veiled by humility, shone forth more and more visibly. Those who knew him and loved him expressed their admiration and their love by calling him *Pippo buono*, the good Pippo; and by this name he was known in Florence. He grew in years, and the first bloom of his youth unfolded itself in Florence; but this name followed him still. When in later years tidings came to Florence of the wonders he was doing in Rome, the Florentines expressed no wonder; they remembered *Pippo buono*, and felt it quite natural that a youth so perfect should expand into the perfection of sanctity. Even now the memory of this name is cherished in Florence, and with it the devotion to our saint. And, indeed, what a fulness of meaning there is in this word *good*, applied spontaneously by a whole population to a simple child! The mystery of grace which led Philip to such perfection in his youth was admirably seconded

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by his education. When we see a plant in the full flush of its vigour, in all its beauty of leaf and flower, and its promise of fruit, we say that sun and dew and the breath of heaven have made it so strong and beautiful; but we know, too, that the husbandman has bestowed on it his care, watering it, pruning and dressing it. So Philip's parents strove to make of him a Christian boy; the fruit of their efforts surpassed their expectations, and perhaps their wishes. It would be very interesting and useful to know the methods of that education which produced so fair an ideal of Christian boyhood; but his biographers say little of them, and we are left to infer them from scattered hints and notices. Ser Francesco did not fail to cultivate the active and supple intellect of Philip, and Florence at that time gave him every means of doing so. It was in 1522, just when Philip's education was beginning, that some learned men began to meet in the gardens in the Via della Scala, which Bernardo and Cosimo Rucellai had laid out in so lordly a style, and founded that academy of the Rucellai gardens which was afterwards so famous. It was for this academy that Machiavelli wrote his books on the art of war, and his discourses on the Decades of Livy; and Buondelmonti, Alamanni, Braccioli, and others, shed lustre on it. The object of this academy was not merely literary; it aimed at a change of the government, and a revival of the glory of the republic; and it numbered among its members the flower of the learned men of Tuscany.

Philip was probably sent at first to some public school, for the Tuscans did not allow their children to languish in ignorance. Villani tells us that Florence had, at that date, ninety thousand inhabitants; that there were from eight to ten thousand children learning

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to read, and from a thousand to twelve hundred who were learning arithmetic. After these rudiments Philip studied grammar and rhetoric, and was imbued with a feeling of what is beautiful in thought and expression by the study of the classic writers. He was amongst the foremost of his school-companions; and there are indications that he studied the classics with love, though without that inconsiderate eagerness which soon made of them a kind of idolatry. His master was one Chimenti, or Clemente, who was then in great repute. Gallonio says of him only that he was a learned Latinist; but it appears that he was also well versed in Greek, and that Vincenzo Borghini, afterwards a distinguished Tuscan writer, was his scholar. These were Philip's earliest studies. We shall see that he was very fond of poetry, as was natural to a mind so poetical, and as indeed was usual at that time.

But Christian parents in the sixteenth century aimed principally at the education of the hearts of their children. They dreaded that an undisciplined will might in an instant lay waste the life of a youth, and destroy or empoison all vigour of thought. And they were right. They thought that, of all the sciences, the fairest and noblest and the most useful was the learning to love rightly and in truth, and on this science they laid the stress of their efforts. And herein too they were right. But what amazes us is the simplicity of the means by which they solved a problem which is in our own day so perplexed and confused. In disciplining the will and giving its due direction to the heart, the Italians of that day did not cast about for new methods, more or less plausible; they boldly trusted the effect of home example, of a living sense of piety, and of the atmosphere of art in which they lived; and then

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they sought the aid of some good priest or religious. It was in the examples of his home that Philip gathered the rudiments of a manly Christian education; he learned from his father and mother how the soul should tend evermore towards God, and nourish itself on the thought of God and on the love of God; he learned from them the virtues which befit a Christian, rather by seeing them than by hearing about them; for children readily follow examples, while reasoning leaves them unaffected. It was, moreover, a blessing to Philip, with his love of art, that his earliest years were passed in Florence when the fine arts were as yet purely Christian and holy. And, more than all, the intercourse permitted him with the best religious of his time contributed largely to his real education.

At that time the cloisters were schools, in which were tended and trained those tender plants which if left to themselves would have withered away, or been smitten with barrenness; but which, when transplanted into that genial soil, became fruitful of virtue and good works. This was the great blessing bestowed on Philip in his boyhood and in his youth by the Dominicans of S. Marco. It was seldom that Philip spoke of himself, but he often said in after years to the Dominicans in Rome, "Whatever good there has been in me from the first I owe to your fathers of S. Marco, especially to Fra Zenobio dei Medici and Fra Servanzio Mini." And he was never weary of speaking of the virtues of the Frati of S. Marco, especially of these two, of whom he was wont to relate actions which border on the miraculous. And indeed S. Marco had at that time very many admirable religious, such as Fra Benedetto of Fojano, Fra Bartolomeo of Faenza, and Fra Zaccaria, all preachers of great renown.

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Philip's relations with the friars of S. Marco must certainly have been very intimate and cordial; and it is a peculiar delight to me to link the endearing name of our own S. Philip with the memories of S. Marco. When we think what glories, what virtues, what marvels of Christian art were then stored within that convent, the home of S. Antoninus and of the blessed Angelico, it is a joy to think too that the beautiful and susceptible soul of Philip Neri breathed that hallowed air, and that here he was trained and nurtured with holy thoughts and affections. As we go round the cells of that great monastery now, the transcendent beauty of the Madonnas of Fra Angelico fill our hearts with piety and love and a spiritual gladness. And in these same cells the youthful Philip came to hear of God and of His Blessed Mother; these same Madonnas shed on his soul the influences of their unearthly beauty; we can hardly refrain from linking in one sweet and sacred bond the kindred souls of Philip and Fra Angelico.

Philip remained in Florence until about his eighteenth year. From boyhood to youth there had been no change but that of growth in grace and in virtue. In his life there is no standing still, no falling back. As the dawn is fair which ushers in a summer's day, so the boyhood and youth of Philip were beautiful as the type and prophecy of his apostolic life. And as the shafts of light fall thicker and more penetrating as the day comes up, and touch the whole world with lovelier hues, even so it was with all the life of Philip. He felt doubtless that unrest, those yearnings, that secret craving for love which thrill the heart of the young. But all this was to Philip only the exercise and the proof of perfect self-mastery. We note outwardly the same goodness,

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piety, kindliness, and suavity of demeanour. But if our eye could see down to the heart, we should find that with the passing years the inner beauty of his soul increased, and became a manly beauty, full of majesty and dignity, and stamped its impress deeper and deeper on his outer being. When he was eleven years old he often went to hear sermons; and he tells us that he listened with delight as well as with great profit to Fra Balduino of the Umiliati, a famous preacher of the time, and that what attracted him in the preacher was not so much his eloquence as his repute for holiness. And so when Philip spoke of Fra Balduino he was wont to say that the city of Florence owed much to his prayers in the troubles which befell it in 1527, when the Constable of Bourbon made his descent into Italy.

Meanwhile the devotion of Philip became more serious and more ardent. He began not only to hate evil, but to hold in contempt many things which are innocent in themselves, but which are too often but stumbling-blocks in the way of perfection. He compared and contrasted these good things with things better far, nobler and more lofty. One day, when some one was showing him the family pedigree, he looked at it with a feeling akin to contempt, and then tore the parchment, saying, "Oh, how far better to be written in the book of eternal life!" In this action we trace the first outline of the figure of the saint who, better than most men of his time, knew the meaning and the mystery of the words: *I have seen all things that are under the sun, and behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit.*

Nor did the virtue of Philip lack the testing and the glory of tribulation. God did not wait for his

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ripe manhood to enrich him with this brightest jewel of the Christian life. He was between fourteen and fifteen when his father's house was burnt down. He knew his father's comparatively straitened circumstances, and the difficulties and anxieties which this disaster would cause; and yet all wondered at his unruffled peace and gentle submission to the will of God. Still more surprising is another occurrence of about the same date. Philip was seized with fever, and as he was unwilling to cause trouble or sorrow to his family, and wished to accustom himself to suffering, he concealed his illness as much and as long as he could. But at length a sister of the mother-in-law of his father noticed his feverishness, and found out how much he was suffering. He was then most affectionately cared for; but still our saint continued to exercise himself in patience, and fortitude, and self-abnegation. In this trial of illness Philip seems already a consummate saint. Blessed truly is he who had so early learned to know the treasure hidden in self-sacrifice, and in suffering willingly accepted for the love of God.

And so, as was natural, the reputation of Philip grew and spread steadily, and his family loved him with an ever-increasing affection. Besides his mother and sisters, there was in the family of the Neri an old lady who tenderly loved Philip, and of whom it is therefore befitting to preserve some record. Bacci calls her Philip's step-mother, but she was really the mother-in-law of Philip's father. This is very clear from the family pedigree. Ser Francesco was married only once, and Ser Filippo, our saint's grandfather, twice. This lady was certainly the Benedetta Corazzei whom we have already mentioned. Towards her

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Philip had always behaved with most affectionate veneration, and she loved him with an exceeding love. She may have seen in Philip only the one hope that her husband's family would be perpetuated amongst men; for when he left his father's house Benedetta wept bitterly, and died shortly after of sorrow.

Philip's leaving home was a mysterious link in the counsels of God, and it could not be otherwise. As he advanced towards manhood, his parents naturally bethought themselves of giving him a position in life; and this was the more necessary that their fortune was then very small. A proposal was made them which they deemed very favourable and most timely. A cousin of Ser Francesco, who was in business and had acquired great wealth, lived in S. Germano, near Monte Cassino; and he wrote to ask that Philip might be sent to him, to help him in his business and to succeed to his property. This uncle of Philip's, as he is called, had married Lisabetta del Cegio, of an honourable family, but had no children. The offer appeared as advantageous as it was generous. It was accepted by Philip's parents and by Philip himself, and the time of his leaving home was fixed. We cannot know what induced Philip to accept this offer. Were we to interpret his thoughts by what followed so soon, we might be tempted to believe that even then the thought of consecrating himself to the service of God and the salvation of souls had presented itself to his mind. He may have thought that in going to S. Germano he was so much nearer Rome, towards which city a mysterious yearning was drawing him; or he may have wished to test his powers, to see whether he could detach himself from all who were dear to him,

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and give himself to God alone. Whatever his motives, there was neither delay nor hesitation in the carrying out of his decision.

It was thus about the end of 1532 or the beginning of 1533 that Philip felt the anguish of a first separation. Gentle and loving as he was, it must have been a bitter sorrow to leave his family, his home, and his native city. Florence was very dear to him, dearer than we of this nineteenth century can imagine, we who are chilled with doubt, and prone to confound our country with the misbelieving sons who dishonour it. In the times of Philip the thought and the love of one's country were pure in themselves, and inseparably blended with the thought and the love of religion. Philip loved Florence because in it he had learned to love God; and then, because he had found in it, in the splendour of art inspired by religion, in its history, in its memories, in its simple and staid manners, in the example of so many of its citizens, mighty incentives to virtue. The Florence that Philip loved and that he then left behind him was the Florence in which were more than a hundred convents, including friars and nuns and collegiate churches; seventy-five confraternities, some of them wealthy and luxurious, but many who lived in great austerity and in the spirit of charity; two very large hospitals, which expended yearly 36,000 crowns on the sick and infirm;—it was the Florence in which, amidst that wealth of art, those stately palaces, those many villas which brightened the suburbs, there was still for the most part the antique calmness and simplicity of life, the old frugality, together with a piety most real and loving, and in its expression most refined. And all this must have made the separation bitter to Philip.

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There were other reasons too. Florence was indeed clothed with the splendour of religion and art and culture, but its political state was most deplorable. Throughout the boyhood of Philip the brilliant, graceful city had been vexed and saddened by seditions, civic conflicts, and several wars. The government presented the appearance of a republic, mixed up incongruously with a feeble and vacillating princedom. Nor had the expulsion of the Medici, and the government by the people, which lasted from 1527 to 1529, tended to heal the mortal wounds of the republic, divided as it was in itself, and surrounded by foes too many and too mighty. After more than a year of struggles, of wars, of sieges, of blood shed in torrents, after the marvellous heroism of Francesco Ferrucci and his Florentine soldiers, the republic breathed its last on the 1st day of May 1532. The last Gonfaloniere left the old palace; Alexander dei Medici took possession of it, and that day was the real beginning of the princedom in Tuscany. This brings us very near the date of Philip's departure. It may have lessened his regret, it certainly increased his sorrow. It was probably a revelation of the vanity of the world, which disposed him to forsake it; for grave public calamities profoundly affect tender and pious hearts, and often draw them mightily towards God.

But however this may be, we must now follow Philip into other scenes. In obedience to the call of God, he left Florence, and never saw it again. The family he left behind him is dear to us for his sake, and it seems befitting to say a few words of its members. His sisters are said to have been of rare beauty; they had been brought up with most affectionate care, and were modest and unassuming as Christian maidens should

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be.[1] Both were married early in life, Catherine to Barnaba di Tregui, and Elizabeth to Antonio Cioni, who died not long after his marriage. Catherine had a daughter who became a nun in the convent of S. Peter Martyr in Florence, and whose name was Maria Vittoria. To her Philip addressed several letters, and she was still living, though her mind was enfeebled by age, when her uncle was canonized. Catherine's second daughter took the veil in S. Lucia in Florence; her name in religion was Sister Anna Maria, and to her also Philip wrote several letters. We find also in S. Peter Martyr a Sister Francesca Tregui, a half-sister of Philip's nieces. We can gather nothing further of Philip's mother. His father died on the 11th of October 1559, twenty-six years after Philip had left Florence. He died in the house of his daughter Catherine, in the Via del Sole, in the now suppressed parish of S. Pancras. In his will he expressed his wish to be buried with his forefathers in the church of S. Michele di Berteldi,[2] now S. Gaetano, which had been built about 1400, mainly by Ser Giovanni Neri of Castelfranco, the great-grandfather of Philip's father. Bacci is in error in stating that Ser Francesco disinherited Philip; on the contrary, in his will, which Manni has published,[3] he leaves all his property to his son Philip, a priest, and on his death in equal shares to his daughters Catherine and Elizabeth. But Philip, who had already given up

[1] In the processes great praise is given to Ser Francesco for the care he took of the true education of his children. See Brocchi and Manni, and, in the processes, the deposition of Simon Grazzini, a Florentine.

[2] This church was commonly called S. Michele of the devils, probably because in it S. Michael was painted in the act of trampling on the hosts of hell. And hence the register of the burial of Philip's father runs thus: *Ser Francesco di Filippo Neri da Castello Francho riposto Michele Dedavoli dì* 11 *ottobre.*

[3] Appendix No. I.

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far greater wealth, gave up his father's inheritance to his sisters at once, by a public document which, together with his father's will, will be found in the appendix. One of his sisters, by a will dated March 1596, bequeathed all that she had thus inherited from her father to the nuns of S. Catherine of Siena in the Piazza of S. Marco.

These are the few details which can be gathered of the family of this great Florentine saint. Henceforward our thoughts are fixed on Philip, going out alone on the stormy and treacherous sea of life. But the memories of his boyhood and youth are very precious. He is a great saint, yet we do not find in his childhood any of those marvels which amaze us and almost lead us to think that the saint is not a man as we are men, but something superhuman and apart. In the childhood of Philip we see simply a most finished type of christian childhood; it attracts our sympathy, it invites and encourages our imitation. The love of God, piety, obedience, a most gentle and unfailing charity, this is all that distinguishes the boy whom men called *Pippo buono*. Mothers may set before their sons the sweet and gracious figure of this holy child; young men may take him not only as the guardian of their way, but as their pattern too. It is beautiful to see Philip in his old age surrounded with boys, playing with them, caressing them with a mother's tenderness, and insinuating into their hearts the love of God; and we feel the beauty of the picture the more deeply when we look back through the long years to the boy Philip, sprightly, joyous, refined, and graceful, so naturally and befittingly known as *the good Pippo*.

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CHAPTER II.

PHILIP AT S. GERMANO.—HIS EARLY YOUTH.

It is a journey of about three hundred and fifty miles from Florence to S. Germano, if we pass through the smiling cities of Umbria into the Roman provinces, and take Rome in our way. S. Philip certainly passed through Rome; but we do not know whether he went by Umbria, or took the shorter and less picturesque road through the Maremma. But a journey of three hundred and fifty miles was, in those days, very long and full of hardships. The roads were always rugged, and they were traversed either on horseback or on foot. Carriages were then unknown, even in France; it would seem that Catherine dei Medici was the first to use them. And so S. Philip probably travelled by easy journeys, on horseback and alone, as was then the custom. We may conjecture that he travelled in poverty too, for the circumstances of his family were straitened, and we may be sure that he would ask for nothing but what was absolutely necessary. This conjecture would seem to be confirmed by what Gallonio tells us, that when Philip left Florence he took with him only one or two shirts, and never again asked anything of his father. Once his sister Elizabeth, who loved him tenderly, sent him two shirts; and the saint told her in return that the shirts had been spoiled by the neglect of the carrier, and then entreated her never again to

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send him anything. On another occasion he was urged to assert his claim to some property at Castelfranco in Valdarno, but he would not even listen to those who spoke of it. He seemed to be journeying towards riches, but he went on his way poor in spirit and in equipment. How often during that long journey, when he thought of those so dear to him, whom he should never see again, and took refuge from sadness in the thought of God, must the vanity of earthly things have impressed him! And may not the vague thought of giving himself wholly to God have gained consistency and strength as he travelled, for the first time and alone, through scenes of such varied and exceeding beauty?

S. Germano, where S. Philip went to live in his eighteenth year, is a small city on the slope of a hill, with a vast and fertile plain before it, watered by a little river on its way to fall into the Liris. In our day it is poor, and there is little or no commerce; and we wonder to find in it in the sixteenth century a wealthy merchant of Florence such as Romolo Neri. But the records of the time, as well as local tradition, lessen our wonder. History tells us that from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century the larger Italian Communes had grown very powerful by commerce and industry. The merchants of Genoa, Milan, Venice, Lucca, Pisa, and many other cities, had shops and banks in the principal cities of Europe, and formed great trading associations or companies. So we find that about A.D. 1338 the Florentines produced 80,000 pieces of cloth every year, and that their brocades were famous beyond all hope of rivalry. Frescobaldi, Capponi, Corsini, Bardi, and many other Florentines had banks in Flanders, in England, and elsewhere; banks which dealt with millions of

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florins, and were able to lend immense sums to the potentates of Europe. The centre of their operations was always their own S. Giovanni; but they had partners or agents and correspondents in many cities, who spread throughout Europe the wares and the merchandise of Florence. S. Germano, being almost halfway between Rome and Naples, was a convenient halt on the highway along which that merchandise must pass from Florence into the great kingdom of Southern Italy. And thus in the middle ages it took rank, and had a name, as a commercial city. And so it came to pass that we find in it families from all parts of Italy, established there for purposes of commerce. There are still Jewish families in it, who have shops, and trade and exchange as their forefathers did. We can thus understand how Romolo Neri was drawn, as others of his fellow-citizens had been drawn, to S. Germano. Everywhere in the cities of Italy we find streets and churches and traditions which record the presence and the influence of members of the great Florentine families.

Bacci and other writers say that this Romolo Neri was Philip's uncle; but if we look at the family pedigree we see that he was really his second cousin, being the first cousin of Ser Francesco. But what is of greater importance is, that he had no children, and had sent for Philip to make him the child of his adoption, to give him what wealth can give, and to make him his heir. Now, he had 22,000 scudi or crowns, a large sum in those days. And so when Philip reached his cousin's house he was welcomed with great joy, and began to learn the ways of commerce. The goodness of the youth, his bright understanding, the grace innate in every Florentine, and in him singularly prepossessing, his simple, modest, and cheerful ways, together with the

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refined dignity of his person and the transparent beauty of his soul, soon won the heart of his cousin. Romolo loved him, and again and again renewed the promise that Philip should be his heir. This loving union of hearts seemed to promise well, and Romolo looked forward to increased prosperity in his commerce, as well as to the brightening and gladdening of his daily life. Still, in all this, in the coming of Philip to a cousin whom he had never seen, to S. Germano, without any choice of his own, and yet with a significance for him so deep; in this offer of sufficing wealth, was an ineffably gracious mystery of Providence, which was understood only in the sequel. God sent Philip in the flower of his youth to S. Germano, because youth is the season of great and magnanimous resolves, and because that was precisely the place to inspire them and to mature them.

Close to S. Germano, and commanding the whole plain, is a mountain crowned with the monastery of Monte Cassino, the most ancient and most celebrated in the world. Every time I see Monte Cassino it fills me with holy gladness not unmingled with awe. It takes me back in imagination to the Holy Land, every mountain of which is hallowed by association with some word or work of our divine Lord, and our eyes can rest with reverent gladness on the Mount of the Beatitudes, on that of the Transfiguration, and on the Holy Hill of Sion. Among the many mountains of Italy dear to the memory of the Church, Monte Cassino takes precedence. It has stood in splendour and in majesty for more than thirteen hundred years; the voice of thanksgiving and praise has never ceased on it, and even now it is bright with the light there set up by S. Benedict in the fifth century. And this light

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shone into the soul of Philip Neri in his abode at S. Germano, and guided him on in the way of perfection and of detachment. It is to me an especial joy to think that our own dear saint drew in great measure his inspiration and his holiness from the ample fountain opened by S. Benedict on Monte Cassino.

He was in the most difficult and perilous years of life. He was left to himself, without the watchful care of his parents; without the loving and wise guidance of the friars of S. Marco, who had been to him the examples as well as the teachers of a holy life. It is natural to suppose that he looked about him for aid and support. He was at the age when the principles of action are as yet unfixed, when the heart is full of vague and indefinite yearnings, and a thousand fancies flit about the imagination; when pleasures promise happiness, and the jarring discord and unresting strife of the mind, the heart, and the senses are most keenly felt. His soul craved food, and it was not yet fully clear to him that God alone was his portion. On one hand was the charm of a life in the world, with ease and wealth; and on the other hand thoughts and yearnings after something nobler and higher—a soul athirst for God. With this choice before him, what struggles and what victories known only to God, what magnanimous resolves, what acts of self-sacrifice in that heart so inflamed with the love of God, to which the world was making so mighty an appeal! Thus much is certain that then, when the temptation was strongest, Philip resolved on a life perfectly and uncompromisingly Christian, and began to consider how he could give himself wholly to God. He had great need of prayer and of counsel. He prayed much, and for counsel he naturally turned to the mountain hallowed by the presence of S. Benedict, and to

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the monks of Monte Cassino, in the providence of God so near at hand.

That celebrated monastery had passed through many vicissitudes in the long years of its history. In this sixteenth century there were in it many men distinguished for holiness as well as for learning. It had a famous school of Greek and Latin literature; the sacred sciences, jurisprudence, and the arts were ardently and successfully cultivated; and many of its monks lived in deserved repute of sanctity. Benedetto dell' Uva, Onorato Fascitelli, Angelo de Faggis, Leonardo degli Oddi, shed lustre by their learning not on their monastery only but on Italy; while Gregorio of Viterbo, Benedetto Canofilo, and Angelo Sangrino were reputed men of singular piety and well versed in all sacred science. The fame of the monastery drew S. Ignatius to Monte Cassino before he laid the foundations of his great society; and so Philip was led by God to this sacred mountain, while his yearnings towards christian perfection were gaining form and consistence and strength within him.

Philip was often at Monte Cassino, and if our calculation of dates is correct, he went there for the first time shortly before the arrival of S. Ignatius. And as we are told that S. Ignatius loved especially to withdraw to the small and picturesque monastery of the Albaneta, which is rather more than a mile from Monte Cassino, we may suppose that Philip too went thither in quest of solitude and recollection—in a spot which has many of the rugged beauties of the Alps. A Benedictine who loved to preserve old traditions, and who wrote in the first half of the seventeenth century, fills for us a void left by his biographers in the life of the saint. He says: "Philip laid the foundations of a

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pre-eminent sanctity in S. Germano and in Monte Cassino, in which places for three continuous years he drank in the spirit of piety and of holy virtues, mainly under the guidance and teaching of one of the most religious monks of Monte Cassino, Eusebio d'Evoli, a patrician of Naples."[1] The authority of this writer warrants us in affirming without hesitation that S. Philip was often at Monte Cassino, and that he there matured the resolve which he soon afterwards carried into effect; and indeed it is very improbable that it should have been otherwise.

We may imagine the effect produced on Philip by the majesty of those solemn cloisters, the beauty of the church, the frequency and stateliness of the holy offices, the vast and wondrous landscape, the presence beneath the altar of the holy bodies of S. Benedict and S. Scholastica, the crowds of pilgrims, and the memories of the saintly and illustrious dead. All tended to bring to maturity the thoughts with which his mind was filled. And, moreover, Philip prepared himself for the great sacrifice of himself to God amidst scenes which placed him in imagination under the shadow of the cross. Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives, and Calvary were far away; but close at hand was a spot which a pious tradition had connected with the Passion and Death of our divine Lord. It belonged to the monks of Monte Cassino. There Philip prayed with fervour, and there his memory is still dear. Those who visit

[1] *De religiosa S. Ignatii, sive S. Enneconis, fundatoris Societatis Jesu per patres Benedictinos institutione.* Costantini Abbatis Cajetani vindicis Benedictini Libri Duo. Venetiis, 1641, pp. 24, 25. I do not think that Philip was three years at S. Germano. His biographers are not clear about it, and contradict each other. It is most probable that S. Philip reached S. Germano in 1533, and left it towards the end of 1534, so that he lived there between one and two years.

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the Church of the Holy Trinity find there an altar dedicated to the saint, and a painting which represents him, so that his memory is ever present to the mind of the pilgrim.

Not far from the port of Gaeta, which is about fifteen miles from S. Germano, a hill rises steep and abrupt from the sea. It is regarded with great veneration, because an ancient tradition says that it was rent when the earth quaked and trembled at the death of Jesus. In the eleventh century we find it a sanctuary dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and in the time of S. Philip it belonged to the Benedictines. About the middle of the fifteenth century a mass of rock fell from the summit of the mountain upon the cleft, which is about seven yards across; and when it had fallen two-thirds of the height of the mountain, it embedded itself so firmly that no power of man could move it. A certain Argeste of Gaeta then built on the fallen fragment a beautiful circular chapel, seven yards in diameter, the windows of which command a wide expanse of sea, which flows also far below under the chapel. This is the Sanctuary of the Holy Cross. From the Church of the Holy Trinity we reach the chapel by a kind of ladder, formed by thirty-five bars of iron riveted into the side of the mountain. And thus the memory of the rock riven at the death of Jesus, as it was popularly called, was revived; pilgrims thronged to the holy spot, and the devotion still survives. It is especially dear to sailors. The light in the little chapel thus suspended in the cleft of the rock shines from afar over the sea, and when in the gloom the sailors see it they cry: It is the Trinity! and they uncover their heads, and pray and give thanks, as they round the mountain into harbour. And when

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the sea is calm and bright, they salute it with discharge of guns, and say a prayer.[1]

In this shrine Philip often prayed and meditated. Everything about it disposed the soul to silence and recollectedness, to a solemn awe, and a sense of eternal things. From the summit his eye might sweep over the Pontine Marshes, the bare and rugged Apennines, which cast their shadows on the blue waters of the bay, and, near at hand, over hamlets and dales with their gardens of oranges and olives. It is a scene which would of itself dispose Philip to grave and holy thoughts; but when he looked down into the cleft and recalled the mystery of the Passion, when he had climbed down into the sanctuary and knelt before the crucifix, God spoke to his heart with the still, interior voice of His grace, sweeter far and more persuasive than any voice of earth. Again and again he returned to the shrine. He was to make a decision sure and firm, binding his whole life. One day, while he was praying there with tender devotion, he felt himself so enlightened interiorly, and his will so profoundly moved, that he resolved to give himself wholly and without reserve to God.

Having come to this decision, he lost no time. He spoke at once to his cousin, and bore bravely the brunt of his arguments and entreaties. Romolo loved Philip tenderly; he had watched his goodness, his piety, his affection, and his heart was knit more closely to him day by day. And so when he became aware of Philip's resolve he grieved exceedingly, and strove by every means in his power to change it. What had he done that Philip should forsake him all at once? Had he shown him too little affection, or grieved him in any way?

[1] My best thanks are due to the excellent Abbot Dom Bernardo Gaetani for much valuable information about this sanctuary.

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Had he not given him his whole heart, and made over to him all his wealth? Had he ever interfered with his prayers and pious devotions, or required anything that could stain the exquisite delicacy of his conscience? And then, Philip should consider that if he left the world, the family of the Neri would become extinct with him; whereas it might revive in him with honour and distinction. That hasty impulse of religious fervour would vanish soon like a puff of vapour, and ere long he would bitterly and in vain lament his improvident and rash decision. Where was Philip to go, without name, or friends, or money? To Rome? But how was he to live there, poor, unknown, without occupation, in a city like Rome? Was he not scared by the sure prospect of misery and desertion? Why could he not at least go back to his country and his home? And why could he not wait a little while, and reconsider his resolve? But Philip was unmoved and immovable. He answered frankly and firmly "that he would be always grateful to his cousin for all his past kindness, and for the inheritance he offered him; but that, as to his counsel, he could not accept it, though he knew it came from his heart." What peace and serenity and dignity in this answer! There is nothing of the evasiveness, the vacillation, the sentimentality which spoil so much that is good in our time, but a holy and manly resolve, manfully carried out, the resolve of a soul tempered and annealed for the battle of life.

This decision of Philip, between his eighteenth and his twentieth year, marks the great crisis and turning-point of his life. It was a giant stride; it gave his future steps an ever-increasing momentum and speed, until he reached his full perfection. But I think that his deliberation and decision at S. Germano have not

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been hitherto sufficiently considered, and that, consequently, the figure of the saint is not seen in all the radiance of its beauty.

Philip Neri was not twenty years old, perhaps not much more than eighteen, when he deliberately chose as his portion a life-long poverty. Poverty is deemed in itself contemptible and mean; he not only accepted it, he chose it. He renounced his cousin's wealth, and embraced instead of it that poverty which Jesus had chosen as His portion on earth. He did not turn away from wealth and ease to become a monk or a friar, though he knew and loved both the Dominicans of S. Marco and the Benedictines of Monte Cassino; but he chose to be, if I may say so, even poorer and more forsaken than these. He did not enter into a family of men poor like himself, where brotherly love stands instead of wealth; he proposed to remain alone, a layman, and in poverty. Nor did he give up the good things of this world for the great riches of the christian priesthood; a noble vocation truly, but with fewer toils than his. He seems to be so absorbed in the thought of the *kingdom of heaven* promised by our Lord to the poor, that it did not occur to him to cast about for some office or employment in Rome, which might make his life less uneasy and painful. And having once cast the world and its wealth away, he never looked back again; he did not turn his steps towards the country and the home he loved, but he went his way to Rome, that he might immolate himself wholly and in every way to poverty, choosing it and loving it in all its unalleviated ruggedness and bareness. While yet a youth Philip caught the full meaning of the words of Jesus, *Blessed are the poor in spirit*, which make poverty, accepted with resignation or deliberately

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chosen, the true riches of the soul. And his understanding this gave a still mightier strength to his soul, already so finely tempered. Above all, the poverty Philip chose set his heart truly free; free from this world's goods, so petty, so unsufficing, so uncertain, so full of anxieties, suspicions, fears, and envyings; and bound it fast to God, the one eternal Good. In a word, this holy love of poverty, which shrank to nothing in Philip's eyes this world's good things and the world itself, enlarged his idea of God, and began to expand his heart with that glowing love of God of which we shall see the manifestations.

In regard of poverty there seem to me to be some points both of likeness and unlikeness between Philip Neri and Francis, the poor man of Assisi; and it is well to note these, now that many Christians are more or less tormented and consumed with the thirst of riches. Just as Francis, in the flower of his youth, renounced for the love of Christ the possessions of his father Bernardone, a rich merchant, so, and at a still earlier age, Philip for the love of Christ renounced the possessions of his cousin, a wealthy merchant too; renounced them so utterly that he refused to take with him to Rome either money or anything else. As Francis, when once set free from the slavery of worldly goods, would never more in all his life hear of them, so Philip would never be induced to accept for himself the inheritance of his father, or the bequests of his dearest friends. If ever he had money he had it for others, never for himself; his heart was at once and for ever emptied of wealth and of all desire of wealth. Both, in speaking of poverty, seem steeped and lost in the depth of wisdom there is in the words of Jesus: *Blessed are the poor*. Francis, in a spirit befitting the

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age of chivalry, speaks of himself as a knight of Christ, personifies poverty, and speaks of her in an exquisite hymn as his queen, his bride, the lady of his heart, for love of whom he languishes, and ends thus: "I cannot rest without her, Lord, Thou knowest; for it is Thou who hast smitten my heart with love of her." Philip's words have fewer figures, and are of hues more sober, as became the age in which he lived, and perhaps his less active fancy; but they are not therefore less forcible. He was used to say: "Would that I could go about begging! I long to come to such a pass as to want a sixpence, or even a penny, to keep life in me, and to find no one to give it me. I wish to live and die poor, and so I live on alms." And as all S. Francis's life is in keeping with his vehement love of poverty; so was it, as we shall see, with S. Philip, who reached such perfection of holy poverty that in the latter years of his life he would not live at the expense of the Congregation, but on alms, and continued to do so almost without its being noticed. To him it seemed a small thing to be a poor man, and to live as a poor man; he loved above all things in poverty what seemed to him the brightest jewel of the christian life—its humiliation.

The great difference between the poverty of S. Francis and that of S. Philip is, that Francis made real and absolute poverty the very base of his order, while Philip formed his Congregation of priests to poverty of spirit—each most wise in his drift and aim, and each fitted for good service in the Church. Their aim differs as the state of society in their respective times differed. Francis struck at the root of the immoderate love of wealth in the clergy of his day, by placing in contrast with them an army of valiant men who had made

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themselves poor for the love of Christ, who were an example of total abnegation of self and of a new wisdom. Francis reconstructed in another form, and set in contrast with the corrupt society of his time, the infant church in Jerusalem, where by means of voluntary poverty *there was but one heart and one soul.* He kindled a light which relieves the gloom of the middle ages. Philip's aim, on the other hand, was to go to the root of the evil in his own day, and reform the whole body of the clergy. In founding his Congregation he taught by word and example, not that absolute poverty which but few priests of the Church can practise, but that poverty of spirit and of heart which is the common obligation of all priests. The aim of Philip was neither less magnanimous nor less grand than that of Francis; the latter founded in the Church a new family of men living in holy poverty, the former inspired and extended throughout the whole Church poverty of heart and of spirit. The poverty which Francis enjoined on his sons was more outward and visible, more widely known, more loudly praised. The poverty Philip preached was an interior grace which might consist with worldly possessions, and it was therefore less visible and less praised. But all this will be seen in a clearer light when we come to speak of S. Philip's Congregation.

Thus Philip's first step in the way of perfection was a magnanimous resolve to be poor, and he took this step in early youth. His soul was strong, and he yearned for freedom, or he could not have taken it; and when it was taken, the vigour of his soul and its love of the holy liberty of the children of God increased marvellously. But in order to know the soul of Philip before he went to Rome, we must consider another and a principal endowment of it, the vein of poetry which

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beautified it, and helped much to make him a great saint.

His biographers tell us that Philip wrote verse, both Latin and Italian, and that in Italian he was a skilful and ready *improvisatore*. Negri speaks of his stanzas, madrigals, and sonnets; and Crescimbeni, in his notes on the history of Italian poetry, says: "Philip was perhaps the first who, after the reform in our poetry effected by Bembo and other distinguished men, treated religion with that fine poetic taste with which Petrarch treated the philosophy of Plato. Philip flourished as a poet about 1540; and then he forsook literature and gave himself wholly to God, and flourished far more in holiness, until his death. But though he no longer wrote poetry, he did not set it altogether aside. He well knew its great uses when guided by a christian spirit, and therefore he made a great point of it in his Congregation. He read poetry himself, and ordered that it should be always read and used by his followers in the way described in our previous notes."[1] Crescimbeni was not a very great critic, but he is a competent witness to the judgment passed on Philip by his contemporaries. Philip's verses belong probably to the period of his youth, and were the first utterances of that divine love which was taking sole possession of his heart. I do not think, however, that they were written at S. Germano; I am inclined to place them in the earlier years of his life in Rome, years marked by his great fervour in religion, and also by his serious application to study. It is possible that when he found himself charged, as we shall see, with the education of two boys, he wrote verses for them in which the love of God took the place of the love which was the

[1] Crescimbeni, vol. x. book iv. chap. xv.

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common theme of poets. It is a great loss to us that Philip, towards the close of his life, burned all his writings; only three sonnets remain to us, and these are given in the appendix.[1] Were we to form our judgment of Philip as a poet from these alone, we should not rank him very high, though the two first have considerable merit. The third, which many say is not really his, is strikingly inferior to the others. Its style belongs to a much later period; and if it were really written by the saint, we should be inclined to assign it to the close of his life.

When S. Philip was a youth, it was still the fashion to imitate Petrarch; but he had become trite from the multitude of his imitators, and there began to prevail a turgid, artificial, and empty style of poetry. Though Ariosto's poem had been printed, yet feeble echoes of Petrarch were still in fashion. Even Michelangelo, who was so daringly original as a sculptor, a painter, and an architect, followed servilely in his verses the traces of Petrarch. S. Philip's sonnets are cast in the mould of their time; but where the followers of Petrarch sang of earthly love, he sings of divine love alone. The fount of his inspiration is higher and purer than theirs; and so while he writes in their form, his ideas are nobler and more sublime.

But it is not in his written verses that Philip reveals the poetry of his nature. There are many poets who have not written verses, and there are prolific versifiers who were never poets. Philip's poetry is shown mainly in the vigour of his imagination, and in the power and energy of his charity. It is not that his style of speaking, like that of S. Francis and other saints in the middle ages, is alive with figures, and bright with the

[1] Appendix II.

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hues of fancy. He feels love as poets feel it; under its influence he sighs and weeps, his face is lighted up, his eyes glow, and he breaks out into words of fire. Like the poets, he is in quest of an ideal, and his yearning towards it is ever more intense; and, like them, he has not found it yet. This ideal goes with him through life; if he rests, it is in hope that he shall reach it in heaven, so that death seems to him the object of most especial desire. It is true that this force of imagination and this immeasurable love flowed down into the heart of Philip from the source of divine charity; but they belong to the natural character of this great soul too. The dartings forth of this love, its bold expressions, its exaggerations, its seeming follies, show an ardent and poetic soul which the grace of God, and a miracle of the grace of God, is directing towards heaven.

And thus Philip before his twentieth year forsook the world, and began a life of continuous perfection. Loosed from the bonds of worldly goods, strong in the might of poverty, nourished in soul by a rare piety, enabled from the very poetry of his character to feel and to express the deepest emotions of the heart of man, he set out for Rome.

But before leaving S. Germano I wish to guide my reader to the house in which the saint lived, that we may think of it with love and veneration. There are no written records to prove where it stood; but an ancient and unbroken tradition places it in the lower and most frequented part of the city. It belongs now to the Signori Mascioli; and on the first floor there is a room which still bears the name it has always borne—the room of S. Philip. There is nothing outwardly noteworthy in it; it is just like the other rooms of the house, nor can we find that it has ever been attempted

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to adorn it and hallow it in honour of S. Philip. Shortly before 1860 the fathers of the Roman Oratory, with the help of those of Naples, prevailed on the Abbot of Monte Cassino to induce the owner of the house to sell it, that the room of the saint might be converted into a chapel of S. Philip. The negotiations were advancing favourably when the revolution burst like a hurricane over the country. And now that his sons are no longer able to gain possession of this dwelling-place of their father, they can but hope that the piety of its owners may some day dedicate as a private oratory the room in which Philip so often raised his heart with his hands to God. It would be a noble thing if those who go up to Monte Cassino to venerate the great saint who there sowed the germs of Christian civilization, could express on their way their loving veneration for another saint who, at an interval of ten centuries, and in dark and troubled times, laboured with so great success that the work of S. Benedict might not come to nought.

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CHAPTER III.

PHILIP'S EARLIEST YEARS IN ROME.

WHEN Philip Neri, in his twentieth year, fixed on Rome as his abode, he had an education of mind and heart befitting a man who is destined to become great. The influence on him of the city in which he was born, the example and teaching of his parents and masters, his intimacy with the friars of S. Dominic, whom he regarded with such reverence and love, the places he had seen, all combined to ensure this. But there was an influence more powerful still. Philip's clear and thoughtful mind, together with his recollected and meditative habits, would lead him to reflect much on the events of public life in his early years. Those events were of unwonted importance, and we may be sure that Philip was not a listless and unintelligent spectator of a scene so various and so stirring. How often and with what sorrow of heart he would think of the losses inflicted on the Church and on Italy! How continually would he raise to heaven those eyes beaming with charity, pleading for his mother the holy Church, which he loved more than his own life, and which lay before him torn by heresy, sunk in corruption, its life tainted and threatened by a revived and aggressive paganism!

Philip was five years old when Leo X. died suddenly, in the prime of life, and not without suspicion of poison.

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His pontificate had been, in some respects, great and splendid; but, unhappily, the baleful seed of Protestantism then sprang up and bore fruit. He was succeeded by Adrian VI., a Fleming by birth, a man of simple habits, frugal even to parsimony in his mode of life, and an enemy to the literature and art of the day, because both had become profane and licentious. Adrian projected many and weighty reforms, and would probably have effected them, but his pontificate was too brief; it was a transient flash of light, which did not relieve the darkness of the way. And then the keys of S. Peter passed into the hands of Julius dei Medici, who took the name of Clement VII. He was a pope of large intelligence, well versed in affairs of state, and would in these days be regarded as a great statesman. But the times were so dark and confused, and the enemies of the Church, within and without, so many and so strong, that his pontificate was in many respects disastrous. Two great calamities have made his reign mournfully memorable. One was, that Protestantism, like a turbid, swollen torrent, overflowed almost all Europe; so that at his death Germany, Switzerland, Silesia, Poland, Livonia, Norway, Iceland, and last of all England, were more or less severed from the Church. The other was the terrible sack of Rome in 1527, which has no parallel in the history of the Church, whether regarded as a warning or as a chastisement. We must go back to Attila and Genseric to find any event which even distantly approaches it in horror; and indeed those barbarians were civilized and even reverent in comparison with the soldiers of the most catholic king and emperor, Charles V. A drunken, furious horde of Lutherans and Catholics together was let loose on Rome. They slew, and sacked, and pillaged, and

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destroyed houses and palaces; they imprisoned and tortured the citizens, men, women, and children; they profaned the churches with ostentatious sacrilege; the Blessed Sacrament, the relics of the saints, all holy things, were desecrated and scattered about; priests and bishops were treated with every insult and indignity and cruelty; and there were other and unutterable outrages not to be thought of without a shudder.

When Philip came to Rome, towards the end of 1534, Pope Clement was dead, and had been succeeded by Paul III. The sack of Rome, and the woes which had fallen on his own Florence, were fresh in his memory, and wrung his heart with anguish. That same year, too, was marked by a disaster of singular gravity; England, which had been so long one of the fairest gems in the Church's crown, was violently wrenched from Catholicism, to the bitter but unavailing grief of the whole Church. With such thoughts and memories in his mind, he must have entered the holy city sad and pensive. Neither the view from afar of its towering cupolas, nor the nearer view of the city of the seven hills as it opened upon him, could gladden his heart. It was with profound emotion that he entered Rome, with that calm and hopeful emotion with which men of Philip's stamp have entered it at all times of trial, with a joy clouded but not overpowered by sadness. To enter into the city of the holy apostles Peter and Paul at a time when their authority was spurned and vilified and trampled into the mire by a terrible heresy; to visit the spots hallowed by the blood of the martyrs when all around were the hideous traces of their recent profanation; to live in the holy city when the lives of the clergy themselves were dissolute or unbecoming, when paganism in science and letters and art was alone in

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honour, this must have been, to the heart of a saint such as Philip, an anguish inconceivably bitter.

It is more important, however, to note that it was precisely when Philip reached Rome, at the beginning of the pontificate of Paul III., that the thoughts of the Pope and of all the better part of the Church were seriously turned towards the convocation of a General Council, to condemn the new heresy, and to reform, at the same time, the discipline of the Church. So that Philip found the longing for reform which filled his whole soul earnest and strong in the Vicar of Christ and in Rome, and was strengthened and encouraged in the resolution he had made. And thus the providence of God so ordered the course of events that the life of Philip was mysteriously interwoven with the life of the Church, and with the thoughts then dominant at the centre of Christendom. We begin to see from afar why this youth of Florence was guided by God to leave his country and home, and to renounce his uncle's wealth, without any clear and fixed purpose, and without any apparent present utility, that he might subserve in his degree a grand design, known and seen by God alone.

The vigour and clearness of Philip's mind, the warmth of his heart, his poetic temperament, the woes of the times in which he lived, his loving devotion to the Church, the very state of Rome itself, all tended to deepen within him a yearning towards a reform of discipline and of life in the Church, and a wish to help in some way to effect it. And yet Philip never spoke of reform, nor manifested his desire of it; he concealed himself in his own humility from the eyes of all, and kept his secret in his heart. He strove to become day by day more pleasing to God, that so he might

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contribute in the spirit of love towards the reformation of the Church; or rather he listened to the voice which bade him become a saint, and waited until a further voice should point out to him his way.

And hence, with mind and heart bright with light from heaven, he begins his life in Rome as one of the poor of Christ, and nothing more. In that vast city no one thinks of him, those who see him pass him by as of no account. He had come without money, without recommendations, without friends; and hearing accidentally of a Florentine gentleman named Caccia, he asks of him such shelter as might be given to any poor wayfarer. The Florentine was pleased with the graceful and singular modesty of the youth, and received him into his house. And here we may pause to trace out any indications that remain of the house in which Philip lived for more than sixteen years as a layman. In his life it is said only that during those years he frequented the Church of S. Eustachio, not far from the Pantheon, on the site of the Baths of Marcus Agrippa, Nero, and Alexander Severus. We may hence infer that the house of the Caccias was not very far from that church. But Piazza, in his *Gerarchia Cardinalizia*, leads us a step further. He affirms that the house in which Philip lived adjoins the church, and adds: "It seems clear from many indications that the house in which he lived so many years is the house subsequently and for a long time occupied by the celebrated banker Luigi Greppi, in the street which runs from the Dogana to S. Eustachio, and adjoining this church."[1]

Thus, then, in the house of Signor Caccia, Philip began a life, poor and perhaps mean to a common observer, but of ineffable beauty to the eye of faith. He lived

[1] Page 835.

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hidden and alone in a little room, poor in itself, and poorly furnished. There was a little bed, a table, a few chairs, some books, and a cord ran across the room on which he hung his clothes. He passed his time in prayer; even his hard and uninviting bed seemed to him an indulgence to be shunned, and he slept mostly on the ground. He was in a christian family, and yet his life was lonely and almost that of a hermit. He spoke little to those of the house, did not sit down at their table, nor in any way take part in their life. His biographers tell us, on the testimony of competent witnesses testifying on oath, that he received from Signor Caccia only a *rubbio* (about eight bushels) of corn every year, that he took this corn to a baker who engaged to give him a small roll of bread every day, and that this, with a few olives and herbs, was his sole food. He refused even the remains of the dinner of the family, and ate his bread near the well of the house, which supplied him with water to drink. Even this scanty measure of food seemed to him on some days too great, and he was known to have sometimes passed three days without any food at all. Yet by the singular grace of God this abstinence did not injure his health; it trained him by degrees to a life in which the body and its senses had but small part, and lived as it were by an overflow into them of the abundance of the life of the soul.

Philip was wont to say that when he was young he lived on three or four shillings a month; but his interior life, the life of mind and heart, was, as if in compensation, robust and full. It was fed at the inexhaustible source of life. His noble and strong intellect could not content itself with letters and arts, with poetry or science or history; it soared daringly above all these

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into a clearer sky and gazed on the very Truth, that is, on God. From God, the Eternal Brightness, light streamed ever more and more into his soul, and in that light he saw the goodness, the beauty, the truth, of which the creature is only the reflexion and the image. Philip's heart was not void of earthly love, but that love did not appease its thirst; it cast itself into the abyss of the love of God, and there was enkindled, inflamed, and expanded. And thus glowing and expanded it turned to the creature with a love peaceful, pure, perfect, and all-embracing. The thought of God and the love of God gave birth in Philip's soul to thoughts and emotions so great and so wondrous that we can neither comprehend nor express them. All around was transfigured to him. The Church, civil society, science and art, man himself as viewed in relation to his last end, all were clothed with a meaning and a beauty unseen by ordinary souls, darkened by passion, or enslaved to human prejudices. He who has this knowledge and this love looks down on all things from a height, his mind and heart are satisfied and content, he rests peacefully in a life of thought and feeling, far from unrest and envying and agitation; a life which may seem outwardly poor, but which is inwardly rich beyond all desire. He despises earthly wealth, takes no thought what the body shall eat, seeks no glory of men. Could we look into Philip's poor little room, we should see him recollected and at peace, conversing with God, praying to God, and in his look and his whole bearing a serenity and a cheerfulness which contrast strikingly with a life so lonely, so poor, without solace or recreation of any kind. And yet his biographers tell us that he was so contented with this life of his, and so little attracted by pleasures, that there grew up within him a

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strange longing desire to suffer for the love of Christ. But this was only the dawn of that splendour of perfection in regard of suffering to which Philip attained in later life.

But while Philip was thus living a life hidden in God, and striving towards his own perfection, his loving heart did not overlook the two children of Caccia. Drawn by his love towards them, as well as by the wish of their father, he resolved to instruct them and make them good. We have no record of the means by which he educated these children for God and for virtue. We may feel sure that his example was more powerful over them than even his instructions. But we do know that Philip did what he had resolved. They were well-instructed boys and good; he transfused into them the spirit of his own piety, modesty, and purity. They became the joy and the consolation of their father; and we find one of them, Michael, rector of the Church of S. Donato in Citille near Florence, while the younger took the Cistercian habit and bore in religion the name of Andrew.[1]

As bodies charged with electricity give out their sparks of light when rubbed and irritated, so souls which are really Christian shine then with their fullest lustre when they are tested and roused by temptation; and a serious temptation which Philip underwent about this time was the first great test which God applied to that chosen soul. He had already overcome the love of riches, and of all outward things; there remained the conflict with himself, the struggle of the senses with the mind and will. In this conflict,

[1] Manni, *Ragionamenti sulla vita di S. Filippo*, p. 34. Ed. Florence, 1785.

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too, Philip had shown himself practised and wary; but God would complete his training and render him a veteran in the christian warfare by means of a great temptation. It came in the guise of pleasure, and of the pleasure which is at once the most selfish and the most keenly felt, the pleasure of the senses.

Ever since sin so fatally disordered our nature there is a dark and profound mystery in pleasure, as there is in pain. Pleasure is perhaps the most necessary, as it is certainly the most eagerly desired thing in our nature; it enters into every virtue and into every vice; it clothes with beauty all holy affections and tarnishes those which are unholy; it sparkles in our eyes, smiles on our lips, gives life and colour to our features and vigour to our movements, and makes the blood flow more nimbly in our veins; and, moreover, it stimulates the mind, and dilates the heart, and peoples the fancy with bright images. And yet this same pleasure is the greatest peril and the most serious impediment we meet in the way towards perfection. It is, I say, a great mystery. Unless there breathe around us a certain air of pleasure, we cannot move a step. Whether we smell a flower, or look at the sea when smiling in beauty, whether we read or talk or love, we do all because we are drawn by pleasure. And yet it is pleasure which agitates us, enervates us, corrupts us, sets us at war with ourselves, degrades us by taking away from us what is noble and angelic, and by setting on us the mark of the beast. Only Jesus, who cleared up the mystery of pain and sanctified it, has cast His light on the mystery of pleasure and purified it. He has taught us that pleasure is no longer since the Fall inseparably linked with virtue, but that the ordinary companion

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of virtue is suffering, so that blessed are they that suffer for justice' sake, blessed they that mourn. And hence it follows that we should approach pleasure not only with great forethought and self-restraint, but with fear and trembling; that many pleasures are evil and unholy, and those alone safe which are noble, spiritual, and restrained; those in short which, being bound up with some spiritual good, are accompanied by charity, and are expansions of charity.

Gallonio tells us that when Philip was in his twentieth year he was remarkably handsome in appearance. One day when he was walking alone in an unfrequented part of the city, absorbed in thought, two strange men saw him, followed him, and tried to lead him away into sin. The saint felt as if a thunderbolt had smitten him; his heart throbbed and his face glowed with the violence of his indignation. He raised his heart to God, and spoke to these unhappy men of God and of His goodness, of the love of heavenly things, and the kingdom promised to the pure in heart; and he did this with such manifest fervour of charity that they not only desisted from tempting him, but yielded to his persuasions, and promised to lead thenceforward lives of piety and virtue. And thus the temptation left no stain on his spotless soul; it exercised his virtue and gave it greater strength; while in the efficacy of his words we have the first prelude of his great apostolate in future years. And as we sometimes see the sky grow instantly calm when the sudden storm has passed away, and the sun seems to shine brighter than before, so was it with the soul of Philip after this temptation.

Such was Philip's life for two years after his reaching Rome. It does not appear that he applied himself regularly to study, unless it be true that he wrote his

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poetry at this time. Yet it was not a sluggishness of mind that kept him back. Christianity has changed the very idea of knowledge. It is not to the Christian, as it was to the pagan, a vain and undiscriminating curiosity of inquiry, not a medley of contradictory notions which hardly cheer the intellect with one ray of abiding light. If a man is in heart a Christian, it is not needful that he should know many things, but that all he knows should be in its proper place, should be sifted, arranged, co-ordinated, and be reduced to unity. The centre of the Christian's more or less extensive knowledge is always the knowledge of good, the science of sciences. Thus God is seen in the centre of the sphere of human knowledge, as Truth, as Goodness, and as Beauty. He pours light on all sciences, gives them their order, their connexion, and their unity, so that they become holy and beautiful, no longer the fuel of human vanity, but a mighty instrument and means of good to our brethren. Science to a Christian man is to know above all things what is good, and then to gather and arrange around this central wisdom all that man can know, from the highest speculations of metaphysics to the smallest details of the botanist or the chemist.

Hence Philip would lay deep and solid the foundations of his knowledge of good, before advancing into philosophy and theology; thus alone would he hope to build securely and durably. But when the time had come he applied himself with diligence and success to philosophy in the college of the Sapienza. His biographers have told us who were his masters. One was Cesare Jacomelli, afterwards bishop of Bencastro in Calabria, and distinguished as a theologian at the Council of Trent. The other was Alfonso Ferro, a Neapolitan, in great repute for his learning in many

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sciences. Of him we know that Pope Paul III. called him from Naples to Rome, to open a school of anatomy and surgery.[1] Bacci and others say that Alessandro Buzio, a very distinguished philosopher of his day, was a fellow-student of S. Philip in philosophy, and witnesses that the saint was amongst the foremost in the Roman school, then in great renown. Nor should this surprise us; Philip's mind was both penetrating and comprehensive; and his natural temperament led him to do all he did with his whole heart, perfectly. But the traces in his life of his knowledge of philosophy are too faint to enable us to judge what branches of it he most willingly studied, and to what extent. Although in the sixteenth century philosophy was not the Babel of confusion which it afterwards became by reason of the unrestrained rationalism which followed the Protestant revolt, yet from the middle of the fifteenth century, and mainly under the influence of Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, it had become wavering and unsteady, lost in disputes and arousing angry passions. To the study of Aristotle and the scholastics was added that of Plato; and philosophy was too often only the battlefield of Platonists and Aristotelians. Still the scholastic philosophy, somewhat enlarged and modified, held its ground. Philip, we may be sure, studied this scholastic philosophy; and if, as is probable, he knew Plato (for from the times of Leo X. most of the illustrious philosophers of Rome were Platonists), I can understand that the larger and more poetical genius of Plato would have a greater charm for him than the strictly logical and almost mathematical method of Aristotle.

[1] See the Biographies of the Saint, and a discourse by Francesco Fabi Montani: *On the Scientific Culture of S. Philip Neri.*

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In addition to philosophy Philip applied himself to theology, although, strange as it appears, he seemed to have no thought of becoming a priest. But to the men of that time the seeking in theology a fuller and more intelligent knowledge of the mysteries of God and of the nature of man was deemed to be, as indeed it is, a means of drawing nearer to God with the understanding as well as with the heart, and of discovering ever new and ineffable beauties in the nature and works of our Father in heaven. And thus, as soon as the opportunity was given him, Philip began to study theology under the Augustinian fathers, who then taught it with more solidity and depth than the ordinary schools of the clergy. His master was Alessandro Stradella, who was subsequently bishop of Nepi. Of course he studied scholastic theology; for the method of Petavius and Bellarmine, so serviceable in the battle with Protestantism, was scarcely known before the Council of Trent. And certainly nothing could be better fitted than this theology to call forth and discipline the mind of man, to provide it with substantial food, and to raise it into a mental atmosphere of light and beauty. Philip Neri gave himself with all the love of his heart to this sacred science, and imbued himself thoroughly with the doctrines of S. Thomas, who was then as now the light and the guide of every student of theology. And thus he not only became a learned theologian, competent to grasp and handle the most subtle points of doctrine, but he used the vivifying and luminous wisdom of theology to warm his heart, and feed within him the flame of divine love. From this source he drew that clear, simple, and mighty eloquence, without pomp of style or show of learning, bright with the light of God.

Philip's eloquence, which was, as we shall see, sin-

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gularly effective, was drawn from another and kindred source, the divine Scriptures. With the study of scientific theology he most wisely interwove the study of the sacred books, for each gives light to the other; only a theologian can penetrate far into the sense of Holy Scripture, while theology ceases to be light-giving and fruitful if it be severed from the written Word of God, the ever-springing fount of light and life to men.

The extent of Philip's knowledge of theology was little noticed during his life, because it is the way of the saints to conceal their gifts and attainments, and because he wrote nothing. Yet we know that his spiritual children were wont to resort to him to hear him speak on points of doctrine, and that his answers to their questions were always prompt, decided, and frank, as of one who had long meditated the mysteries of the sacred science, so that many were won to God by the depth of his theological knowledge. That marvel of penetrative insight and theological depth, the *Summa* of S. Thomas, was constantly in his hands; and this loving predilection for a book so severely and almost geometrically reasoned out, and so profound that ordinary men are rather repelled than enlightened by it, discloses to us the grasp of Philip's mind, and the habits of close study he had formed in his youth. Indeed, we are told that he discoursed with the most learned theologians of the time with a subtlety so keen and reasoning so close, that they were amazed at him. We know too that he was on this account held in the greatest esteem by Fra Ambrogio da Bagnolo, a very learned theologian, and afterwards bishop of Nardo;[1]

[1] It is a pleasure to me to record that this Ambrogio da Bagnolo, who was so fond of discussing theology with S. Philip, was a man of

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and also by Fra Paolino Bernardini of Lucca, reputed in his day a great divine. Both these took especial delight in discussing with Philip abstruse points of doctrine, as was the custom of that time. The modesty and humility with which he concealed his learning made him often appear a simple and unlettered man rather than a trained theologian. But humility and modesty cannot quite conceal the truth they gracefully veil. It was sometimes Philip's duty to speak, or the wish to do good made him speak, and then was seen what light of divine wisdom lay hid in that mind which he wished to be deemed by men so little and so poor. Sometimes he would speak tersely and concisely, without reasoning; but from time to time he would reason and discourse with the clearness and the fulness of a subtle and practised master. The blessed Alessandro Sauli, bishop of Pavia, gives us an instance of this. When he first knew Philip he says he thought him a saint indeed, but quite simple and without culture. But one day a discussion arose on some point of theology, and he was so astounded as well as enlightened by Philip's learning, that he ever thereafter declared him to be a man not less learned than holy. We shall see in the sequel in what terms Francesco Panigarola of the Friars Minor, a famous preacher in his time, Gabriel Paleotto, Agostino Valerio, and other men eminent for learning, bore testimony to the theological learning and power of our saint.

While thus devoting himself to study, Philip was neither less assiduous nor less fervent in prayer. In him prayer was fed and vivified by those very things

fine mind, a doctor of the university of Paris, a great preacher, and a singular benefactor to Naples and our whole province. He was deemed the glory of the little city of Bagnolo.

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which are to too many an occasion of coldness and dissipation of mind. It was his will, inflamed with the love of God, which constrained his intellect to know more of God and of His mysteries; and his increasing knowledge increased in return the ardour of his love. One fact related by Gallonio and Bacci shows this. Going one day to the school of the Augustinians, he saw there a beautiful crucifix. The mere sight of it was enough to bring before his mind every detail of the awful agonizing scene of the Passion, and the love of his heart broke forth in tears and sighs and ejaculations. Nor is this surprising. S. Thomas tells us that to study is to pray; and this is especially true when the heart of him who studies is, as was Philip's, on fire with the love of God. If all visible things speak of God to him who loves God, how should those high truths, natural and supernatural, which make up theology, fail to speak of God, seeing that they reflect Him more directly, and more nobly show forth His greatness? If the shoreless expanse of sea, the heavens bright with stars, the earth fair and gay with flowers, fountains of waters and rivers as they run glittering to the sea, or snow-clothed mountains towering into the sky—if these draw us nearer God, and open our hearts in almost unconscious prayer, how can the study of God, and of man viewed in God, do other than draw us nearer God? Those invisible things of God which, as S. Paul tells us, are known by the things that are seen, must surely be more fully and readily known by the study of those natural and supernatural truths which refer directly to Him. In a word, if God is in a man's heart, God vivifies all his knowledge; and the more he knows the nearer he is drawn to God. Thus Philip studied; and naturally, after three or four years of unremitting application, he found him-

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self more learned, while by grace he was more pious and fervent and saintlike than before. But now he broke off his studies suddenly and abruptly, and changed the direction of his life; and we must recount the reasons which led him to this decision, and show in what way it was a further and higher step in the ascent of his soul towards God.

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CHAPTER IV.

PHILIP LAYS ASIDE HIS STUDIES—HIS WORK AS A LAYMAN.

PHILIP'S intellect was strong and penetrating; he loved study, and was making rapid progress; only some very grave reason would lead him to lay his studies aside, for in his soul they ministered to piety and the love of God. He knew, too, that a large store of various learning was needful, in order to detect and expose the errors of his time. And yet, when he had devoted perhaps three or four years to study, and had acquired what he deemed knowledge enough, he closed his books and sold them, and gave the price of them to the poor. This sacrifice is not a common one in the lives of the saints; indeed, I have met with it, under somewhat different conditions, only in the life of the great saint who seemed to Dante

A splendour of cherubic light.

Of S. Dominic we are told that when he saw many poor dying of hunger at a time of great scarcity in Spain, he sold his books that he might supply their wants. But the saint of Spain was moved to sell his books by his tender compassion for the poor; Philip sold his that they might not distract him from God. It was a confirmation, too, and a renewal of his resolve to live in holy poverty; the money was not

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much, but it was all he had, and he gave it with his whole heart to the poor. And this further step in the path of poverty was joined with a sacrifice more costly still, the relinquishment of congenial studies for the love of God.

His motives for this sudden change were doubtless many. Chief among them was the constraining clearness of that inner voice which speaks to us all at the more solemn turns of life, and which we call *a vocation*. It is the voice of conscience as well as the voice of grace; rather, it is the voice of conscience enlightened by grace, and so it is a voice at once human and divine. It is not precisely the voice which enjoins good and forbids evil, though this voice too is human and divine. It is rather a voice which bids us choose of two good things the better, which points out to us a way, not perhaps the best in itself, but the best for us; which guides us then especially when our choice is the harder because it lies among things in themselves indifferent, and is accessible to doubts and fears. It is not easy to determine the tokens by which we may recognize this voice; but each one of us who is living according to the will of God has heard it in every great turning-point of life, and is blessed so far forth as he has obeyed it.

It was, then, this interior voice of grace which made Philip resolve to give up his studies, and to devote himself to an apostolate, not of knowledge, however holy and divine, but of charity. All society, ecclesiastical as well as civil, needed to be penetrated and pervaded with a renewed fire of love, and our Divine Lord came to bring this fire anew upon earth by means of Philip and the other great saints his contemporaries. If we look at the saints whom God raised up at this

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first outburst of the protestant heresy, we do not find them primarily distinguished by knowledge, but by love. Neither S. Ignatius, nor S. Camillus of Lellis, nor S. Cajetan, nor S. Philip Neri, nor S. John of God, possessed the learning of many saints of the middle ages; they defeated heresy and reformed the Church by love. In the spirit of love they drew souls around them, and became fathers of large communities of spiritual children; and all devoted themselves especially to doing good. And in all these communities we notice that, when it pleased God to raise up for them learned men, the most renowned for learning were not the holy founders themselves, but their sons. It would seem that the remedy for the ills of the sixteenth century was the charity which makes saints, and that genius and learning were to further, without leading, the great movement and work of love. Neither S. Ignatius nor S. Philip was distinguished for unusual learning; but it pleased God to send as aids to the former the prodigious erudition of Suarez, Bellarmine, and so many others, as He gave S. Philip the incomparable Baronio.

Inasmuch as this abandonment of his studies was the turning-point of S. Philip's life, and gave its special form to his apostolic work, and shows us the means by which he reformed the Church and resisted error, it is fitting that we should consider it with some attention.

Among the many reasons which presented themselves to Philip's mind, and determined this new direction of his life, was undoubtedly the state of learning and culture at that time. The grand harmony between religion and knowledge which Jesus Christ the God-man set forth in its perfection, and which the middle ages

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had striven to bring about in society, was already faint and scarcely perceptible. With but few exceptions, science, letters, and art were saturated with the spirit of paganism, and so were full of peril to the Christian. On the other hand, they were but too easily perverted into the motive and fuel of vanity; for learning was held in honour by all, by the popes especially, and it was but too often rewarded and exalted with little regard to character or morals. And thus it came to pass that in those countries in which the assaults of heresy were fiercest, many of the most learned *paganizers* (as they were called) threw themselves into the enemy's camp. A saint such as was Philip might not unnaturally begin to have suspicions of the worth and the drift of learning, even without any special indication of the will of God. It is well to note also that this relinquishment of his studies was for a time only. His biographers show us that Philip studied as a priest, and had many books. Shortly before his death he had removed from his own room into the community library a goodly collection of books, now preserved in the library of the Vallicella. I find amongst them five works of Savonarola with the name of the saint written in them, and especially the Triumph of the Cross, which he valued so highly. There are also Aristotle and S. Thomas, Homer and Virgil, with many books of science and general literature.

An apostolate of charity, such as was Philip's to the close of his life, is but little understood by many. They think it means something timid and tentative, feeble and languid; whereas it is in reality the very opposite of all this. Others cannot understand that charity avails more than learning to beat down and scatter the errors of the understanding, and of science falsely so

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called. They think that Philip, for instance, might have done much more to overthrow Protestantism and the other errors of his time by consuming his life in study, than he did by inflaming his heart with love, and diffusing the spirit of love around him. To such, if such there be among my readers, I would say a few words which will cast light on many of the things I have to relate.

Most assuredly, it is of the very essence of the Church that it should be militant; as our Lord has said: *I am come not to send peace on the earth, but a sword.* And all the saints are militant together with Christ; the souls of those who rise above their brethren in holiness are the more inured to war, the more eager and valiant in fight. A saint is in conflict with injustice, error, and sin; within is fighting, that he may subdue his passions and hold them in subjection; there is fighting without, to put to flight the enemies of Christ, of virtue and of good. He is in conflict with princes and nations and with society, whenever and in so far as they are false, unjust, or tyrannical; and he strives to reach by conquest the inmost heart of men, to root out some lawless passion, or crush some lurking error. Some short-sighted persons, indeed, cannot reconcile this war-like attitude and spirit with christian charity. They do not reflect that divine charity has nothing of the morbid and weak tenderness of earthly love; it is manly and robust; its tenderness, like that of God, is the tenderness of a father, together with that of a mother. And so charity is not only consistent with this war, it is the one weapon with which the Christian fights and overcomes. The combatant in this war does not hate his adversary, but loves him; defeat is very often real gain, and seeming victory a loss; for it is a war, not

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against the man, but against the evil which degrades and despoils him, undertaken to arouse and strengthen within him the good which unites him to God, the Fount and Source of all being. In this war he fights best and conquers most decisively who loves most and gives most. The harsh strife of tongues around us wins no victories for Christ; opponents are only irritated and repelled when they are assailed without charity. Only let our brethren see and feel that we truly love them, that we long to give them all we are, even our life itself; then we shall awaken and arouse within them a sense of the dignity and worth of their nature, and become their allies in their warfare with themselves. Only the weapon of love can lead captive the will of our brethren; and when the will begins to love as God would have it love, then it subdues the intellect, and scatters all its darkness. And this is why the errors which beset the understanding in regard of Christianity are overcome by charity rather than by science, helpful and desirable as science is. In times of threatening heresy or misbelief, God sustains His Church with miracles of heroic charity, the science above all sciences. It was not argument nor science which won the Roman world to Jesus, but charity, truth, and martyrdom. And this may help us to understand why the whole life of our saint was an apostolate of marvellous and unwearying charity, and why he began it as he did.

About the year 1538, the fifth year of the Pontificate of Paul III., it would appear that Philip was led to come forth from his retirement, and to take the first unobtrusive steps in the way that was opening out before him. He was not quite twenty-three, a layman, and unknown. The aged and infirm Paul III. undertook the journey

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from Rome to Nice, in order to reconcile the king of France with the emperor, and thus smooth the way for the General Council which it was then proposed to hold at Vicenza. And in that year, too, Philip began that life of charity which was to spread so widely and be so mighty an aid in the holy work of reform. The grand and heroic charity which saves, renews, and reforms, is the charity which loves Jesus with a glowing and sublime love, and all mankind in Him; which for His sake loves those who are in themselves unlovely and even repulsive. This holy charity drew Philip from his little room into the hospitals of Rome. He disregarded or overcame all natural repugnances, and devoted himself to the work of tending and consoling the sick. He made their beds for them, swept the floors, fed them with his own hands, brought them this or that kind of food according to their need or their craving, and poor as he was he had always some little trifle to give; so that the poor sufferers soon began to feel that he really loved them, and returned his charity with loving look and smile. But Philip aimed at more than this. When he had won their affection, he began to speak to them of the kingdom of God, and of the hope of heaven, with such force of faith and love that their hearts were enkindled as well as soothed. If they were suffering much, his real sympathy disposed them to patience; if they had but little faith, he revived it with the warmth of his charity; if they were too eager to recover, he spoke to them of the perils of the world, and of the blessedness and rest of heaven. Naturally, a young man would feel after a time a sadness at view of so much suffering, a loathing and disgust at its repulsiveness, but Philip never wearied, never shrank back. He would often stay all day long with them, in spite of the sickening smell

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of the room, and of so much that was harrowing to the feelings and revolting to the senses. And if he saw any one near death, he never left him. He would kneel, young as he was and a layman, at the foot of the bed and pray for the dying man, and console his last moments on earth, like an angel from heaven strengthening the sufferer in his death agony. We may suppose that he began to feel then the great need the dying have of some to comfort them in their last hour; it is possible that he may have known in those earlier years that Camillus of Lellis who was subsequently his penitent, and who under his direction established his community of the Servants of the Sick. Of the friendship of these two saints we shall have to speak in the sequel; but we may in this place fitly remember that after S. Camillus had established his Congregation, Philip tells us he saw two angels of surpassing beauty, and clothed in brightest light, suggesting words of consolation and strength to two of its fathers who were assisting a sick man in his agony.

The example of Philip seemed something new at that time, and it had results far greater than could have been expected or hoped. Some were only lost in astonishment, but many were inspired with the resolve to do as he was doing. First one and then another began to work with him. Their numbers grew rapidly; priests, noble laymen, substantial citizens, men of the people, were drawn to follow Philip's example. They attached themselves to him, and strove to imitate his gentle charity, his sweetness, the exquisite and winning grace with which he ministered to the suffering. And so by degrees the sphere of this work of charity widened; the hearts turned towards the poor in love were set free from many guilty passions, many inor-

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dinate desires; some who had hardened themselves against all other influences felt their hearts relax and yield in the gentle, genial warmth of charity, and conscience and all good thoughts revived within them. Those who have not witnessed it can hardly imagine the power of such works of charity, not only to rouse the will and determine its action, but to overcome the most rooted and ingrained errors of the mind.

It is to me a beautiful picture—our S. Philip, in all the bloom and grace of his youth, going through the wards of the hospitals, followed by a crowd of priests and laymen, who all love him and are imitating him. Jesus first taught us to minister with love and veneration to the sick; and here we see with thoughtful joy one of His most beloved disciples reviving and extending, after sixteen hundred years, and in times of sadness and of peril, this noble and blessed ministration. Nor is this all. Jesus will bestow on this young man the gift to imitate Him in His miracles of healing. We shall see Philip renewing, in the name and by the power of Jesus, the gracious wonders of Judea; and multitudes will go after him because through him our divine Lord manifests anew His power over nature, over men and their sicknesses, over all things.

Encouraged by this success, Philip took another step in the way of his apostolate, and began to speak to men to draw them to virtue, and enkindle within them the fire of divine love. If we picture to ourselves the state of society in Rome, and the place that Philip occupied in it, we shall feel how daring and almost incredible his resolve was. Still he had an extraordinary power of drawing souls, and an interior inspiration urged him to use it. Fair and comely in person, with a look of sunny brightness, and a most gracious and gentle flow

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of words, his influence on hearts was irresistible. Why should he not use these gifts for the good of his brethren, whose souls he so ardently loved? Can there be a greater work, a more noble or a grander, than the turning men from sin to God? Is he not doing precisely what Jesus did, together with Him, and in the power of His name? When the love of Jesus is living in a heart, it constrains the will to speak of God, and it gives the spoken words a true beauty, a force of persuasiveness, an eloquence indescribable. Philip could not publicly preach the Gospel in the churches, nor rebuke the sins of the people. He did not think highly of the style of preaching at that time, and he had neither authority nor influence as yet to change it. And so he went about in the warehouses and shops, not to buy or to sell, but to speak to all he met of God and of His kingdom, with a winning grace and singular effect. He went into the banks too, not to deposit money, nor with bills of exchange, but to discourse on faith, on the Church, and on virtue. You might meet him from time to time in the streets and public places, with a group of eager listeners around him. They are gathered by no vain curiosity, but by the wonder and the pleasure they feel in hearing that simple and graceful youth speak of God with the eloquence of the heart. He haunts the schools, not to learn, but to sow here and there, wherever he can, the seed of the divine word. And the seed sprang up and brought forth fruit abundantly, because he who sowed it was dear to God, and the divine Husbandman sent down on it the dews of His grace. It seems to us a new and strange apostolate, yet its results were incalculably great. Young men living in the world may learn much from it; but let them remember that such an apostolate is fruitful

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only when the heart is inflamed with the love of God; if the heart be cold, or entangled in any passion of earth, it becomes unprofitable and even pernicious.

This first apostolate of Philip extended over a period of more than ten years, and yielded abundant fruit. The Lives of the saint mention some of its results; they are very significant and give us an idea of his work. Thus, in one of those shops, belonging to the Bettini, dealers in cloth and mercery, there was a young man from Piacenza, whose name was Enrico Pietra. One day Philip spoke to him with great fervour of the kingdom of God, and his words had such effect that Pietra abandoned trade, gave up the world, and became a true man of God. We shall meet him again in due time with Philip, a priest at S. Girolamo della Carità, and then we will cast a glance at the holy life of this disciple of our saint. His words produced the same effect on Giovanni Manzoli, whom he found in the warehouse of the Buonsignori; he too forsook the world and gave himself wholly to God, though he lived and died in the state of a layman. Philip's virtue and piety were so great, and his words were so impregnated with love, that he won all hearts. And thus he wrought great good, almost without knowing it. Many who listened to him as he spoke of God left the world and entered religion, though he had not spoken to them of conversion and perfection. S. Ignatius, who was then in Rome, was wont to say that as the bell calls people to church while it remains itself in the bell-tower, so Philip called many to the religious life in various orders, while he himself remained in the world.

As he continued his discourses amongst the shops

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and in the public places of Rome, he felt drawn to a work far more difficult, the conversion of souls from sin to God. He had neither office nor direct mission, but he knew that S. Peter teaches us that all Christians have, through the mercy of God, an initial and rudimentary priesthood. And so he strove to convert souls to God and to repentance not only by his example and his discourses, but by earnest supplication to God with tears and *unspeakable groanings*.

There are some who speak of the virtues of the saints of God as effeminate and petty; but what resolve could be more daring than this of Philip, a young man living in the world, in a city like Rome, with so many priests around him, devoting his life to the conversion of sinners with an energy of will and a perseverance almost beyond belief? His contemporaries tell us that he went about, everywhere and all day long, constrained by his ardent love of souls. He accosted all without distinction, save that his youth and his position as a layman withheld him from trying to reclaim those unhappy women whom the world had corrupted, and then cast contemptuously away to perish. When he fell in with those who were living in sin he would begin to talk with them, drawing them to himself with his wonted benignity and grace, until he had as it were subjugated their hearts. He did not disdain to eat and drink with them if he hoped to gain their souls for God, remembering Him who ate and drank with sinners. And then his prayers became more importunate; his tears, his sighs, his impassioned pleadings were all for the conversion of these souls. And his prayers had power with God, and conversions were daily multiplied. Thus, in order to convert sinners Philip first turned his heart to God, and then

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from his heart spoke to the sinner. The words we speak to our brethren are then luminous and lifegiving when they are the echo of our words to God, and in harmony with our prayers. He who speaks without praying speaks but a lifeless word; if we combine with our words earnest prayer to God, then those words, like the words of God, are *living and effectual.*

Among the conversions brought about by Philip at this time, one of the most remarkable was that of Prospero Crivelli of Milan. He was cashier of one of the principal banks of Rome. His inordinate desire of wealth had led him to seek it in ways illicit and unjust; and he was, moreover, enslaved by sins of the flesh. He used, nevertheless, to go to confession, until one day his confessor, F. Polanco, a Jesuit, refused him absolution because he persisted in his refusal to give up the occasions of his sins. Crivelli had not strength of will enough to forsake sin, but at the same time he was disconsolate that his sins could not be forgiven. He knew that Philip was a saint, and so he went to him in great sorrow of heart and told him the whole case, begging him to pray that God would grant him grace to give up his sin and obey his confessor. I have never yet been able to do this, he said; but what will God refuse to the prayer of one He loves? Philip was deeply moved, and did not conceal his emotion. As is the wont of saints, he did not look at the fault of the sinner, but at his wretchedness and misery. He treated him with the most tender benignity and sweetness, uttered neither reproach nor rebuke, but strove to console him with gentle and cordial words. Then he went on to speak to him of spiritual things, and to enkindle in his heart the holy love of God. What he said is known only to God; we know only that as he spoke

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Crivelli's heart was pierced and smitten with a loving compunction, and was manifestly stirred to its depths. And then Philip broke off his discourse with the words, "And now go; I will pray to God for you, and I will pray so much that you will give up this your occasion of sin." What simplicity and faith there is in these words! No confidence in himself, unbounded confidence in prayer; no hesitation or doubt, an absolute certainty of success. And in a very short time Crivelli gave up every occasion of sin, and received absolution from his confessor. From that time he placed himself under the guidance of Philip, and became in his hands a man of great virtue and spirituality, an example and an edification to those to whom he had been a scandal.

Such was for twelve years the life of Philip, its days full of active charity to all who were suffering, and of the fruitful sowing of the word of God. It may seem to be a narrow sphere of action; but it is in truth vast as the multitude of those who suffer, and of those who are wandering in the ways of error and sin. The events of these twelve years resemble each other too much to be separately narrated; one event of vital importance which occurred towards their close, and which greatly enlarged the sphere of Philip's apostolic life, shall be related presently. We must now fix our thoughts on the mystery of Philip's interior life as a layman, and try to follow its unfolding and growth. It is a study of exceeding value and attractiveness, for it lies wholly within the sphere of love, and it alone helps us to believe and understand the wonderful efficacy of Philip's exceptional apostolate.

One of the principal effects of Christianity was the creating a perfect correspondence and harmony of the outer and the inner man. It is a harmony which grows

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fuller and more perfect in proportion to the growth of virtue, and it is the true measure of the holiness of a christian man. In a great saint we see it in all its excellence of perfection, and we must always think of it as we study the life of our dear S. Philip. And now that we have seen his outward ways and works in this first period of his life, let us try to reach his hidden thoughts and the secret love of his heart. We shall then know what can be known of him both outwardly and inwardly. And this knowledge is of surpassing value to us, because the weak point of our christian life is the too evident want of harmony and accord between the outer and the inner man. Too often we show outwardly the habit and the actions and the words of men after God's own heart, and are inwardly bare of all virtue, and perhaps even the slaves of our passions.

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CHAPTER V.

PHILIP'S INNER LIFE AS A SECULAR.

I ENTER with great diffidence on the study of the inner life of Philip Neri during the years he lived in the world, and came forth as an apostle. It is a life of mystery, all made up of divine love, so that we can hardly look fixedly at it; our minds are overpowered and confused by excess of light. It is not easy in this our time to understand a love which soars above all that is visible, transcends all creatures, and rests in presence of the Eternal Beauty not only in full content, but in a rapture of bliss no earthly love can give. It is natural that earthly love should glow with a sensible warmth, for it sees its object; that it should manifest itself in the quickened beatings of our hearts, in the animation of our features, and the light of our eyes; but that these same effects should be produced in us, and in a degree immeasurably greater, by the love of what is unseen, is to us almost beyond belief. Yet it is certain that divine love is sometimes more vehement and mighty in its effects upon the whole being of a man than human love. And thus in S. Philip, even during his life in the world, we see an ardour of divine love unsurpassed by that of S. Teresa, or any of the great saints of the middle ages. It manifested itself outwardly in a simple, holy, mortified life, consumed in acts of charity, a life which many persons in the world might

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follow from afar. But if we look within his soul, and watch that movement of love, ever more eager and swift as it draws him nearer God, we are startled with wonder and with awe.

While Philip lived in the world, the love of God, prayer, and purity of heart were so intimately united in him that they appeared to be but one virtue. He loved God with an exceeding ardour, and the expression of his love was prayer. And the love of God overcoming, absorbing all other love, made his heart pure with that purity of which Jesus said, *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* If a man loves God supremely, his heart is pure. He not only loves with a pure love all that he loves, but the law of the senses is rescinded and annulled, and the law of the spirit bears sway alone. Hence it follows that in man born of fallen Adam, purity of heart, if perfect and abiding, shines forth with an ineffable radiance of beauty akin to that of holy angels. It overcomes nature, transforms it, and perfects it. It restores to the soul its supremacy over the body, and bestows on the body itself an inchoate spirituality, the prelude and anticipation of that wherein it will be beautiful when transfigured in glory. We understand Philip's purity in the earlier years of his life, amidst corruption so great and so general, when we feel with what ardour he loved God. His heart was as a rose surrounded with thorns, which neither wound it nor hide its beauty. We will first speak of prayer and the love of God, as they were united in our saint; and then we shall see their reflexion on him in his angelical purity.

His biographers tell us that he was wont to spend many hours each day in prayer, as if to give vent to his love; and as he prayed, the impetuosity of his love

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increased. Often while he was praying, the action of his heart was so quickened by the rush of blood to it, that he felt as if a fire were burning within his breast, the outward token and expression of the spiritual fire of his charity. His tears would flow abundantly, and words and sighs of impassioned love would burst from his lips. At times he would bare his breast, as if to cool the ardour of the flame of his love, and even roll himself on the ground. His emotion was so vehement and uncontrollable that, in order to conceal it, he sought out the most hidden and retired places for prayer. Amidst all this his countenance was always serene, a smile rested on his lips, and the calm beauty of his soul seemed to pass out upon his whole person and transfigure it.

Nor should this surprise us. It is God who is the object of the love of the saints, He inspires it and feeds it; and He fills their hearts from the great deep of His own blessedness. In the heart of Philip it was but a little rill flowing from an ocean infinitely vast, but enough to satisfy the desires of the most longing soul. Sometimes the transport of his love would fill him with unwonted gladness, and at other times compel him to cry out: *No more, O Lord; no more.* The love of life itself, so strong in man, waned away and vanished in comparison with the sweetnesses of divine love; and the rather that these were in Philip like the smiling dawn which leads up a day of ineffable gladness. And thus Philip, in the flower of his youth, indirectly reveals to us his abounding unutterable joy of heart when he says: "To one who loves God truly, there is nothing more weary and irksome than life; so that it is most truly said that the saints bear life in patience, and have death in yearning desire."

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Amidst these secret and unspeakable joys of divine love, Philip multiplied his voluntary sufferings. The world recoils from them with horror, but Philip longed for them; not because he was different in nature from other men, but for those higher reasons which were present to our Lord when He said, *Blessed are they that mourn.* Hence Philip's longing for suffering was especially eager, because suffering willingly accepted and even desired enabled him to offer to God a sacrifice than which none is nobler, more generous, or more loving. He who truly loves knows that the furthest reach of love is the desire or the readiness to suffer for the object of our love. Nor was Philip satisfied with the manifold sorrows and pains which are bound up with life. He slept generally on the bare ground, and shortened the time of his sleep; he found out innumerable mortifications by which to hold his body in subjection and obedience; he scourged himself daily with fine chains of iron, and in every way increased the rigour of his lonely life. He had resolved to gain an absolute and unchallenged sovereignty over himself, and therefore in the earlier years of his life he refrained from all recreations, however innocent, and trained himself to recollectedness and silence by denying himself all needless conversation. These things are unintelligible to those who do not love God with a great and exclusive love; they are looked on as needless and useless, as forms empty of all reality. To those who love God supremely, they are great and acceptable sacrifices to Him, as well as means to confirm the supremacy of the soul over the body, and over all creatures. They are some of the many forms of the *foolishness of the cross*, foolishness to the natural man, while to those who raise their hearts and minds above the earth they are

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the wisdom of God. Philip's love to God was thus always glowing and fervid, and always beautiful in its manifestations, whether it brightened his countenance with the radiance of his soul, or expressed itself in prayer, or flooded his soul with joy, or prompted a longing for pain and suffering; and Philip manifested it and increased it in various ways which have a bearing on his subsequent apostolic life, and on his methods of reform.

Thus he would frequently visit the seven greater churches or basilicas of Rome, feeding his love on the memorials of God's goodness they contain. It is a distance of ten or eleven miles, and it takes seven or eight hours to make this pilgrimage with befitting composure, and with the necessary pause in each church. The way lies partly in the city and partly in the country; in part, amidst the throng and bustle of men, and in part, through the still and pensive loneliness of the Roman Campagna. It is an excursion of singular interest and pleasure even when made solely with a view to the grand memorials of times past; but when made with the soul fixed on God, and in due dispositions, it is one of those consolations we can never forget. All along the way, in the basilicas we visit, in the sacred bodies there enshrined, a thousand records of love and self-sacrifice are presented to the mind; or rather the one great record of the great love of Jesus Christ, repeated anew in the saints from year to year, from day to day, in their martyrdom of blood or of desire. Sometimes in the day, but most usually by night, when all was still around, Philip would leave his little room and take his way to S. Peter's, slowly and absorbed in prayer. Then through the Lungara and by S. Maria in Trastevere, and over the bridge called the Ponte Quattro

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Capi, he would walk the long distance which separates S. Paul's from S. Peter's. From S. Paul's he would continue his course to S. Sebastian's, and so along the Appian Way to S. John Lateran and Santa Croce. Thence he would turn his steps to S. Lorenzo, and back to S. Maria Maggiore, the close of his pilgrimage. Those who met him as he walked along, so humble and so poor, alone, and rapt in meditation, would hardly suspect the mystery of that pilgrimage, or the consuming love hidden within that heart.

As he went on his way, the expanse of green by day, or the starry sky by night, would raise his soul towards God in adoration and praise. His prayers at the doors of each basilica, so near the relics of the martyrs, would bring back vividly to his mind the memory of their conflict and their triumph, and lead him on in thought to the great martyrdom of Calvary. S. Peter, S. Paul, S. John, S. Sebastian, S. Laurence, whose memory is stamped on five of these basilicas, were martyrs very different in the circumstances of their martyrdom, but all well fitted to enkindle and increase the flame of his love. S. Maria Maggiore, where is preserved the cradle of the Infant Jesus, and Santa Croce, where is venerated the Holy Cross of our redemption, would bring before him the beginning and the end of the earthly life of our divine Lord, together with the dearest name of Mary, who, as mother of Jesus and as participating in the great act of our redemption, is so inseparably bound up with the mystery of Bethlehem and with that of the cross. Both would go straight to Philip's heart, and nourish that tender, ever-present thought of Jesus and of Mary which characterized all his life. Both are interwoven with the memories of martyrs, of the Popes who raised those churches, of

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the saints who rest in them in peace; and these too would feed Philip's soul with holy affections. And thus at every step in this pilgrimage he would find the trophies and the incentives of holy charity.

Before long we shall see Philip, when he was a priest and the Father of the Oratory, gather great crowds of the faithful for this pious pilgrimage which he had for so many years made alone. We shall see, too, how it became one of the most cherished and effective resources of his apostolate. Suffice it now to say that it was in this holy devotion that Philip perfected himself in the love of God and in the grace of prayer; and that the most wonderful ecstasies of his love, and the most inflamed utterances of his prayer, were those granted him in his visits to the seven churches.

We spoke just now of the ineffable joy which Philip sometimes felt in these visitations and outbursts of holy charity. It was most real, and yet we must not suppose that it was continuous or even frequent. In the life of a saint, as in that of Jesus, joy is but a passing brightness. Here, in this present life, the Christian combats and suffers after the example of Jesus Christ, made for us *a man of sorrows* and of conflicts. True it is, that to him who has Jesus in his heart, even struggle and sorrow are always serene and peaceful; but the moments of that true unmingled joy which give from afar a foretaste of the joys of the kingdom of heaven are but few even in the life of a saint; they are easily reckoned up, as under a northern sky we reckon the days undarkened by cloud.

And thus Philip's great love did not dispense him from struggle and suffering; it rather rendered both more frequent, more terrible, and intense. The same man to whom God at times granted a joy so ecstatic

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might often mourn with Job: *My skin is become black upon me, and my bones are dried up with heat; my harp is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of those that weep.* In these earlier years of his life his warfare with Satan was rude and severe, as if the enemy of his soul hoped to find in his youth and his comeliness, in his vigorous and affectionate nature, and in his inexperience of life, some vantage ground for his attacks. And the providence of God permitted these assaults, knowing that Philip would find, as every Christian may find, power to resist them in the victory won by Jesus over the tempter, when He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. And, moreover, these unresting assaults made Philip's soul watchful and alert, gave it its last finish of temper, and strengthened his hold on God and his love of God.

We are told by his biographers that the devil strove especially to disturb these visits to the seven churches, which were to the saint such incentives of holy charity. Thus, on one occasion, Philip was going towards S. Sebastian's, and had reached the spot called the Capo di Bove. It was night, and in the thick darkness he was going on, as was his wont, absorbed in thought and alone, praying as he went with singular fervour. Suddenly, by the permission of God, three devils spread before his imagination a most foul vision. They appeared as men exceedingly ugly and repulsive in form, and the very sight of them filled his heart with loathing and dread, and with an unutterable sadness. The saint was startled; but he went on with his prayer, and the vision disappeared. On another occasion Philip was passing by the Coliseum on his way to S. John Lateran. His soul was filled with high and holy thoughts at sight of that vast pagan amphitheatre,

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now sanctified by the cross planted in its centre.[1] There, in the midst of freemen and of slaves, of those who are shouting in exultation and those who are moaning in agony, it recalls and throws into strong relief two states of civilization, two ideas of life, two religions. But Philip was rudely roused from thoughts like this by a fresh appearance of the devil, not fearful as was the former, but foul, seductive, and immodest. But in that purest heaven which overhung the soul of Philip this loathsome vision could excite only a deeper sense of the love of God. He prayed on, and was again victorious. Nor was this the only conflict sustained by Philip to keep himself unspotted in soul. As was natural, the devil strove again and again in the opening years of his life to cast some stain on that stainless purity. We read that three women who had abused God's gift of beauty and degraded His gift of love, dared to try to lead Philip into sin. Their attempts were renewed again and again, sometimes by all together, sometimes by one alone; they hoped that little by little they might break down the saint's resistance by lessening his horror of it. Thus beset, Philip took no notice of them or of their words, but knelt down to pray. The calm beauty of the purity stamped on his countenance, and beaming so brightly in his eyes, smote the hearts of these wretched women with terror and awe, and they fled hastily away. The time had not come when S. Philip would have from God the grace to convert

[1] When these words were written the cross was still standing in the centre of the Coliseum. It has been of late removed under pretext of archæological investigations. Let us hope that it is so, and that we shall ere long see the cross restored to its ancient place. It is not only a grand confession of faith and expression of piety; it records the history of the old Rome and the new, and the triumph of Christianity throughout the world. Woe to us if we have ceased to value it; a tenfold woe if from hatred to it we tear it from our public monuments.

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such sinners, but it came in God's own time; and as we read of the Magdalen and the woman of Samaria that they turned to Jesus the hearts the world had polluted, so we shall see sinful women drawn by Philip to give to God their whole hearts, healed and cleansed by grace. It was now enough for him to endure, to conquer, and to put to flight the tempters and the temptation. And he teaches us thus with what infinite precautions we should engage in ministrations such as these, so full of peril. The covenant which Job made with his eyes is an energetic expression of the perils which encompass us, now that our nature has been laid waste by sin.

Philip's purity was only another aspect of his love of God, and this is true of all purity that is perfect and persevering. We see in our saint that this virtue is one ray of the mighty love which possesses his whole heart, a ray which penetrated and transfigured his body, so that his words, his look, his smile, his gestures, all that was about him, breathed and inspired purity. It was perfect purity of heart, and therefore it shone as a soft light on his beautiful features, and revealed itself in the bright and most delicate blush which would at times instantaneously overspread his face. If he had to speak of anything connected with sins against purity, his words were so chosen that they conveyed without unveiling his meaning, and evil seemed on his lips to lose its nature. His eyes were guarded with jealous care; he either did not look at others at all, or looked with such simplicity and modesty as to inspire virtue. Modesty was his inseparable companion, even when most alone; and he submitted to be thought in this respect narrow-minded and fanciful, rather than wound the delicacy and the shrinking sensitiveness of this virtue.

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In a word, Philip kept strong guard over his senses; he well knew how often and how imperceptibly the enemy steals through them into the sanctuary of the heart.

What a mystery is christian purity! To him who knows it and loves it, it is a jewel, a treasure beyond all price. No beauty, nor glory, nor riches can compare with it in value. On the other hand, it is the virtue the world least understands, and therefore affects to undervalue. It confounds the world, and places it in strange contradiction with itself. Therefore the world despises it and yet admires it; it declares it impossible, and it exacts it of the ministers of the sanctuary; it lays snares for it and destroys it, and it discards and dishonours those who have lost it; it speaks of it as the enemy of all love, whereas in truth it is the enemy of selfishness only.

These considerations will, I hope, throw some light on the beautiful mystery of S. Philip's life. We have already seen, and we shall see more clearly when we come to speak of Philip as a priest, that he possessed a very wonderful attractiveness, drawing souls to him by a mysterious power they could neither resist nor account for. In these days he would be spoken of as a saint distinguished for his sympathy. Now, if we examine this power we shall find that it lay, not in his eloquence, nor his powers of reasoning, nor in his learning, but mainly in the virginal purity of his heart. From his pure heart, as from an untarnished mirror, there was reflected on the outer man an image of the inner beauty of his soul, and it was that image which drew all towards him.

It is this also which explains his great love for children, and their great love for him. Childhood is naturally pure, and loves the pure without knowing

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why; and the pure in heart feel themselves peculiarly attracted towards children. And thus when children saw Philip pass they would run up to him with great gladness of heart; and Philip loved them in return, and instructed them, and lavished the tenderness of his soul on them. All through his life, and especially after he was a priest, he delighted to make himself a child amongst children, to draw them to God; and in his serene look, in his bright penetrating eyes, even in his gentle words, they unconsciously felt the goodness and the purity of his heart. So they drew each other as the magnet draws iron; there was between them a mutual affinity and sympathy. Just as impurity, which is the most selfish of vices, stamps a character of selfishness on the whole man, and inspires aversion and repugnance, so purity, which is another form of holy love, clothes the whole man with attractiveness, and inspires love and trust.

But it is time to look more deeply still into this sacred love which is the ground of all Philip's life, and study another aspect, or rather another operation, of it.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE CATACOMBS—S. PHILIP'S HEART.

No Christian can approach Rome without profound emotion. He remembers that for eighteen centuries it has been the centre and pivot of the religious, the moral, and the civil life of mankind; he sees all around him the stately and continuous manifestations of this life in the baptisteries, the basilicas, the domes and towers and obelisks which crowd the city; amidst the ruins of old Rome he traces the wonderful history of the new Rome, living and speaking to him still; everything touches him, elevates him, and invites him to high and serious thought. Beneath the shelter of the papal throne painting, sculpture, and architecture combine to glorify the triumph of Christianity; and the old traditions of the Capitol, the Coliseum, the Column of Trajan, the Arch of Constantine, and the Pantheon, attest it too. Pagan Rome lingers on in its venerable ruins, to render visible the steps of the transformation of the pagan civilization into the christian. Except in Palestine, where all is transfigured and most intimately connected with God by the mystery of the Incarnation and the visible presence of Jesus, no city in the world has a history which can even distantly compare with that of Rome; nowhere are there records and memorials of such virtues, sacrifices, grandeurs, and glories; no other city can point to an institution so ancient, so

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noble, so grand as the Popedom; none has with equal splendour of art manifested the Infinite through the finite.

And under this stately Rome we see, there is another and a kindred Rome, hidden, dark, and under ground, the Rome of the catacombs. It has its solemn beauty, as of a night when all around is dark and still, and only when we look upwards we see some scattered points of tremulous, distant light. This subterranean Rome is a shadow of the Unseen and the Eternal, and in some respects surpasses in interest the Rome of which the sun reveals the majesty and the splendour. Now these catacombs, which seem to some so gloomy, poor, and melancholy, were very especially dear to S. Philip, and dear they must be to all who can know and feel why he loved them so much.

Let us go down with our saint into the catacomb which he most loved, and linger there a while with him in thought and feeling. The catacombs are almost interminable subterranean ways or passages, which turn and wind beneath the suburbs of Rome and the Campagna. They run on different levels or planes, so that we find at times three or four storeys one above another, to a depth of from eighty to a hundred feet beneath the ground. They look like cemeteries of the dead, and they are of course mainly cemeteries; but they are also the ways along which men passed who heard behind them the steps of the persecutor. Sometimes we walk freely and at ease, by the light of torches; sometimes the way becomes so narrow and low that we can scarcely creep along. On either side are excavations large enough to hold each one body or more. All around is thick darkness, a stillness of the grave, a mysterious solemnity and awe. These narrow passages, and these

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innumerable excavations, all in unrelieved darkness, were meant to conceal from their desecrators the tombs in which rested the faithful of the earliest ages. They show us how rapidly and how widely the faith had spread. The larger catacombs are twenty-six in number, corresponding with the twenty-six parishes of Rome in the third century; and there are besides some twenty lesser groups of cemeteries scattered here and there in the suburbs and in the Campagna. If we put together the length of the already explored paths or corridors of the Roman catacombs, we find that they would form together a line of about three hundred and fifty miles, that is, half the length of Italy. It was thought at one time that all the Roman catacombs communicated with each other; but the geology and the hydraulic conditions of the soil sufficiently refute this hypothesis. Nor is it true that the catacombs were excavated by pagans and then turned to Christian uses. It is now clearly ascertained that in all their extent there is not the faintest vestige of paganism; and that the whole elaborate and immense system of winding paths and niches, and excavations which sometimes rise towards the surface and sometimes sink down to the lowermost strata of the soil, was the work of Christian men, the inspiration of their faith and their love, stamped with the impress of the religion of the cross, and of the ages of persecution.[1]

But we must not regard the catacombs only as cemeteries of the faithful during the ages of persecution, to whom the Roman laws always left perfect freedom of burial.[2] For three centuries they were as a holy

[1] See the *Roma Sotteranea* of the illustrious Commendatore De Rossi, a work above all praise.

[2] The Roman law, even when it punished with death on religious

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city, the true Rome of the first Christians, the Rome in which they were born again, and grew in faith and love, and were fed with Bread from heaven, and were laid up in the sleep of peace at the last. They had all the movement and the organization of a city. There alone could the mysteries of religion be celebrated. There the Christian was baptized into the life of faith and truth. There the Christian family had its origin; the nuptial blessing was given in the resting-places of the departed in the faith. There, were numerous oratories in which the faithful joined in the oneness of prayer. There, over the bodies of the martyrs the Holy Sacrifice was offered, and holy communion received. And there the Church was perpetuated by the consecration of her sacred ministers. Those who lived and worshipped thus drew in day by day the spirit which makes martyrs; they could not be otherwise than ready to die for the faith, for their priests and bishops; they breathed the very air of martyrdom. The darkness and the silence, the intricate windings of the passages, the tombs, all marked it as a city of the dead; and yet all was life, the life of faith and hope and love. There and thus were sown the seeds of a social state which was timidly showing itself in the Rome of the upper air, even while paganism was still dominant, and which, when the pressure of persecution was withdrawn, shot up into the grand and stately tree of christian civilization. And thus, in this subterranean city, was formed the christian people of those ages,

grounds, scrupulously respected the liberty and sacredness of cemeteries. And this accounts for the existence of the catacombs, and for the practice of celebrating in them the Divine mysteries. When Christians could not meet together in public, they naturally assembled in the only places where they were protected by Roman law and traditional feeling.

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rich in virtues and fruitful in good works, beyond any other generation.

This city had its social life, represented by the ecclesiastical hierarchy; it had its annals, recorded with a little phial of blood, or a palm-leaf, or some brief inscription, or a prayer imperfectly worded; and it had its arts, rude and unformed, but spiritual in a degree never surpassed. As art it was perhaps poor, but it was a beautiful manifestation of the infinite charity of religion, and it was the germ of that higher art which in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was, for too brief a time, the highest expression of heavenly beauty; and, by its grace and its simplicity, the best teacher of the nations in religion and in civilization. It is, however, far more important to note that this early christian art, now that it has been thoroughly studied, discloses to us, and confirms with its unequivocal and authoritative testimony, the dogmas of our most holy religion. It reveals to us, moreover, the ineffable mystery of sacred charity in those first generations of the faithful. They lived amidst sights of cruelty and of blood; day by day they saw their fathers or brothers, their wives or sisters, their priests, bishops, and popes, dying amidst torments; yet on those walls there is not one word of anger, nor in those paintings any allusion to the persecutions they were suffering; we find only records or signs or symbols of pardon, of love and hope and eternal triumph. Those Christians evidently loved much, and their conversation was in heaven. Through the gloom we discern rudely painted figures of persons with eyes upraised to heaven, and praying; there is the Good Shepherd bearing home on His shoulder the sheep He has found in its wanderings; amidst garlands of flowers and fruit, we find

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scenes from the Old Testament or the New, Noah in the ark, Moses fetching water from the rock, Job on his dunghill, or the miracle of Cana, the multiplication of the loaves, and Lazarus coming forth from the grave. In a word, the christian art of the catacombs is displayed either in symbols of eternal truths, or in allegories, parables, scenes from the Holy Scriptures or the lives of the saints or the annals of the Church, representations of its liturgy, or rough sketches of our Divine Lord, of His blessed Mother and the saints; it is an art which, however untutored, attests the faith and reveals the charity which ruled in that true city of God, subterranean Rome.

Such are the Roman catacombs, which S. Philip loved with a love the deeper and more tender that there the light of the great city of Rome was, by the inscrutable judgment of God, darkened and veiled, that it might shine forth again brighter and more pure. In 1535, when S. Philip reached Rome, the only catacomb visited by pilgrims was that of S. Sebastian; the others were well-nigh forgotten, though they had been well known and much venerated in earlier ages.[1] S. Sebastian's was held in great veneration for its own sake, and also because it was for a long time confused with the Catacomb of S. Callistus, where, around the shrine of S. Cæcilia, were gathered the tombs of all the Popes from the beginning of the third century to the peace of the Church. Careful researches have now clearly proved that the cemetery of S. Callistus is quite separate from that of S. Sebastian, and lies a little

[1] For nearly four centuries after Constantine gave peace to the Church, the Roman catacombs were visited by crowds of pilgrims. But when the ravages of invaders made it necessary to remove into the city the sacred bodies of the martyrs, the veneration which had attached to them gradually waned away.

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nearer Rome, on the right of the Appian Way It is not within our scope to speak of this cemetery of S. Callistus, second in interest and importance only to that of the Vatican; let us return to the Catacomb of S. Sebastian, where we shall see the traces of our S. Philip.

If we leave Rome by the gate of S. Sebastian and proceed about two miles along the Appian Way, with the Roman Campagna on either hand, we come to the church of S. Sebastian, with its catacomb. The church it of very great antiquity, and we do not know by whom it was built; the catacomb is rich in precious memories. There, after the lapse of fifteen hundred years, still rests the body of that great S. Sebastian who delivered Rome from the scourge of pestilence, and was then pierced with arrows in the Hippodrome between the arch of Titus and that of Constantine, and finally beaten to death with clubs. From the day on which the holy matron Lucina laid the sacred body of the martyr in that spot, it has borne his name, though countless other martyrs are laid up there in their rest.[1] The Popes S. Damasus and Adrian I. restored and embellished this catacomb, which was, especially in the middle ages, held in singular veneration. S. Jerome tells us how in his boyhood he used to visit it on feast-days, to train his soul to the love of eternal things; S. Bridget in her revelations says that as the sick regain strength with fitting food and sweet pure air, so she was wont to brace and invigorate her soul by praying in it; her daughter S. Catherine came there often, with the especial intention of pre-

[1] I do not mention the several translations of the holy body, which was finally restored to the church of S. Sebastian by Pope Honorius III. in 1218.

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serving her purity amidst many dangers; S. Charles Borromeo passed the whole night of the vigil of S. Sebastian, praying in that cemetery. But none went thither so perseveringly as S. Philip, who seems to have for twelve years almost lived in its dark, damp, underground recess.

The records of the time relate that, while Philip was still living in the world, he was for more than ten years accustomed to go almost every night to the Catacomb of S. Sebastian, and continue there in prayer. That he passed long hours there is clear from what his biographers tell us, that he used to take with him, either under his arm or in the hood of his cloak, some devout book and a little bread, enough for the wants of a day. And hence we read that F. Francis Cardone of Camerino, a Dominican and master of novices at the Minerva, was wont often to set Philip before his beloved novices as a pattern of Christian penance, saying: "Philip Neri is a great saint, and amongst other wonderful things he has lived for ten whole years in the caves of S. Sebastian by way of penance." I do not indeed believe that our saint really lived at S. Sebastian's, for the records of his time show that he did not give up his little room in the house of the Caccias; but it is certain that he often spent whole nights there, and that when he went by day he used to remain many hours in prayer, so that it came to be doubtful where he really lived, whether at the catacombs or with the Caccias. It is true that the catacombs are damp, and that at certain seasons of the year it is impossible to remain in them long without danger to life; and it is also true that, as S. Jerome says, the darkness is so thick that as he entered he applied to himself the words of the prophet, *they go*

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down alive into the pit; but Philip was already regarded as being under the special and even miraculous protection of God, and no one thought it wonderful that he took no harm.

It is not easy to understand this lingering of Philip in the catacombs for more than ten years, and for so many hours at a time; but, once understood, it throws a light on much that seems singular in his after life, especially when he became a priest. In those lonely and seemingly dreary hours passed in the darkness of the catacombs he prayed, and did nothing but pray. Prayer was to him thinking as God thinks, and loving as God loves. And there the living and speaking image of the Church during the ages of persecution helped him greatly, and made his prayer more fervent and more prevailing. It was a scene at first sight mournful, full of gloom and melancholy, but when looked at with Philip's faith it brought back the image of those early ages in their singular beauty. It was the image of the Bride of Christ, persecuted, oppressed, execrated by men, but in the eyes of the Heavenly Bridegroom pure and undefiled and holy, clothed with the added beauty of martyrdom, and all glowing with a love which perhaps has never since been so intense. The impress of this love is seen in all Philip's life; it gave it a charm of simplicity which reminds us of the children of the primitive Church, so that in many respects he looks more like a man of the earlier times than one whose lot is cast amidst the splendours and the conflicts of the sixteenth century. It was this, too, which made him all through his life place so little trust in human means and worldly prudence, to an extent which sometimes seemed excessive even to good and wise men of his time. This was the impress

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on him of the time when the Church was destitute of those human means and aids to which she has always a right. Moreover, the love of the Church of Christ in the days of its sorest trials and sorrows gave him that yearning desire of mortification, which appears at times to verge on extravagance. And his long sojourn in the catacombs naturally gave him a longing for martyrdom, and that most vivid and energetic faith in virtue of which he wrought miracles almost as if unconsciously, and very often while seeming to jest.

I think, too, that even in the formation of his institute of the Oratory, Philip had before his mind the christian society of early ages, with its simplicity, its faith, and its charity. S. Luke tells us of that first generation of the faithful, that their mutual charity was so great that they *had but one heart and one soul;* so Philip resolved to create a family the one only bond and the life of which should be charity. I do not now dwell on the fact that in some particular rules of his Congregation we may see that the saint leaves the middle ages to which he belongs, and falls back on the primitive Church, so far as the altered conditions of the times allowed. Of this we shall speak in its place. It is enough now to observe that, although the particular form of the Oratory grew out of various circumstances, his long dwelling in the catacombs and the habits of mind he there acquired had a very great influence on it. Perhaps even the title itself of *the Oratory,* and the very conception of a Congregation which should take its name from prayer, dates back to those years which he passed in almost continual prayer, with the image ever before him of the generations who had gathered themselves together in those rude and solemn excavations to pray to God.

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It was this, moreover, which slowly matured and brought to its perfection his great thought, the reformation of his own Rome; a thought which accompanied him throughout his life, and was in such unison with the thoughts and aims then dominant in the Church. The ten years during which S. Philip most frequented the catacombs, from 1540 to 1550, are precisely the years in which Paul III. laboured so earnestly for the assembling of the Council of Trent, and in which its first eight sessions were held; sessions in which dogmas of the greatest importance were defined, numerous canons of discipline decreed, and the way thus cleared towards other and greater reforms of ecclesiastical discipline. In those ten years Paul III. succeeded, through his legates Di Monte, Cervino, and Pole, and with the co-operation of all the fathers of the Council, in settling the canon of Holy Scripture, and assigning the rules of its interpretation; he defined the doctrine of original sin, enacted salutary laws in regard of the education of the clergy and the duties of bishops and priests, set forth an admirable exposition of the doctrine of justification, and unfolded the doctrine of the sacraments, especially of Baptism and Confirmation; and during those years Philip was praying in the old Rome underground, revolving in his mind the reformation for which the Pope was so earnestly labouring, and sanctifying himself that he might thus be a true reformer, mainly by the example of his own holiness.

We must not suppose that Philip had anything in common with the gloomy fanaticism of those self-styled *reformers* who would bring the Church back to the almost infantine simplicity of its first years; a conceit so poor and irrational would have ill beseemed the lofty and luminous intelligence of the saint. He

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knew well enough that it would be just as impossible to bring back the Church to the outward form and ways of the early ages, as to bring back the grown man to the form and habits of his childhood. But he knew that the Church would be most easily and most truly reformed by a return to the vivid faith and fervent charity of those early ages; and therefore he lingered long at that primitive and ample source of light and love, that he might so catch its spirit as to be able to impart it to others. He wished also to restore to the Church many of those ancient usages which were precisely adapted to the needs of the sixteenth century, and helped mightily towards its reformation. Above all, he wished to revive or recreate anew in the Catholic clergy that spirit of keen and simple faith, of self-sacrifice and gentle charity which formed the christian family of early times. And thus we come to understand why God, who in His providence willed that Philip should be the apostle and the reformer of Rome, led him for ten years into the catacombs, that he might by long meditation imbue himself with the spirit of the primitive Church, that spirit so beautiful in its light and warmth, so wise, so simple, so exuberant in its moral and religious life. It is a great and pre-eminently wise thought, to bring up from the catacombs the means of reviving a languishing Christendom, to reform the Church of the sixteenth century by the force of one's love for the Church of the ages of persecution, if only it be restrained by prudence, directed by charity, and enlightened by a full and clear knowledge of the wants of one's own time.

Before leaving the catacombs we come upon an event in Philip's life which had a great influence on all its

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subsequent course, and this event we must study with care. It was in the year 1544, when Philip was twenty-nine years of age, and at the close of the spring. A great christian festival was at hand, the great day which commemorates the first Pentecost, when all the apostles were gathered together with one accord in the *upper chamber*, and, as they were praying, there suddenly came from heaven a sound as *of a rushing wind, which filled the whole house where they were sitting; and parted tongues as it were of fire appeared to them and sat upon every one of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.* It is a great event, revealing to us the source of the power and holiness and efficacy of the ministry of the holy apostles; an event which perfected the Church in love and began its real work. And in like manner the apostolate of Philip had its Pentecost, and in was in this year 1544. He was still living in the world, though he was predestined to the apostolate of Jesus Christ, and was already exercising part of its functions. Then he had no companions in his ministry, or rather, they were not as yet his associates in his apostolate as a priest; and hence none were present with him at the miracle of his Pentecost. Those companions will be given him by the Lord in due time, and they will receive their measure of the grace of that Pentecost through Philip himself. He was as yet alone; and therefore he will be alone when he receives the gift of the Holy Ghost, a gift he will receive in a form differing but little from that in which it was vouchsafed to the holy apostles. The outward symbol of that inner miracle will still be fire, but it will not rest on his head; it will sink down into his heart. It is not a tongue of fire that Philip will receive, but his heart is to be a heart of fire, and therefore the symbol will be a flame

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whole and rounded, as of a globe or ball which goes down into his heart, and pervades and clothes it all. And this fullest effusion of the love of God into Philip's heart will precede by six years the day which will see him a priest; so high is the perfection with which God will prepare him for the priesthood, and so high, too, the example of love he must give as a secular to those who live in the world.

A constant tradition, the truth of which is attested by F. Consolino, as is recorded in his life, assures us that this marvellous Pentecost took place in the Catacomb of S. Sebastian, a spot well fitted to be the scene of a miracle so unwonted. Gallonio relates that it was on one of the days immediately preceding the feast of Pentecost 1544, and that Philip was praying fervently. His prayer was full of love; but as love is ever insatiable, he was imploring more and greater love. And this longing desire was that day united in Philip's soul with the thought of the Holy Ghost, of His gifts, of His divine Person, the substantial Love of the Father and the Son. And passing naturally from the thought of the Holy Spirit to that of the coming feast, the whole scene rose up before him: the upper room at Jerusalem, the apostles praying together with Mary ever blessed Mother of Jesus, the sound suddenly heard as of a mighty wind, the tongues of fiery flame, and above all that full and sensible outpouring on the apostles of the love of God, so that they felt themselves other men, fit and ready to convert, to reform, and to sanctify the whole world with their words. Philip, then, was praying thus when suddenly his heart was filled with a great and unwonted gladness, a gladness all of divine love, mightier and more impetuous than he had ever felt before. Within him was a joy as of Paradise, and

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doubtless he felt as S. Peter on the mount of Transfiguration, *Lord, it is good to be here.* It was but a gleam, a passing gleam, too bright to last; and as Philip's soul was exulting in its gladness, the Lord revealed to his imagination, and perhaps even to his bodily sense, a globe of fire which entered his mouth and sank down into his heart. It was a symbol, a divine appearance, and nothing more; the great and abiding reality was a fulness of holy love which had in him effects the most wondrous and astounding. The love of God overflowed from his soul upon his body; his blood coursed so rapidly through his veins that his countenance was all lighted up and flushed; his eyes, his cheeks, his forehead, all beamed with a ruddy and unwonted glow. The impulse of divine love cast him to the ground; he tore open his habit to bare and cool his breast, and his whole body thrilled and quivered with strange emotion. It looked like a painful convulsion, but he was in joy and not in suffering; it seemed to be some strange disease over-mastering his body, it was really only a new and most mighty working of the love of God in him.

And this is, in truth, an excess and exorbitancy of love if we consider in Philip only his condition as *viator*, still a pilgrim on earth, fast bound with the chains of the body, and therefore with a capacity of love limited in comparison with that of the blessed in heaven. And so it produces strange effects in him, effects of which we find no example in the lives of other saints. And as we see at times that the strongest engine man can make will suddenly give way and burst, if the heat beneath be too intense, and all outlet be denied to the gathering vapour imprisoned within, so was it with Philip. By reason of this impulse of divine love, and the swifter rush of blood through his

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veins which was its consequence, his heart must be dilated and have an ampler space to move in; and as there was a natural and invincible obstacle to this expansion, love forced a way and miraculously thrust out two of his ribs, curving them in the form of an arch over his heart. And thus it gave itself room and found rest in that dilated heart, and the two ribs remained throughout his life thus arched outwardly, their severed ends never to be united again. All this was more clearly understood after the saint's death, and none can understand it better than we, the *Filippini* of Naples; for here in our midst the miracle of this dilatation is ever fresh, speaking, visible. We have the privilege of possessing, as a pledge of the protection of our Father, one of the two ribs which were thus miraculously thrust out and curved into an arch. And it is not only our inestimable privilege to preserve amongst us this witness of the great fact; it is our incentive to virtue and a motive of holy charity. As the soldier keeps with loving veneration the sword which was the instrument of victory, so we treasure this bent and arched rib which is the trophy of the victory of divine love in Philip over his bodily frame, thus constrained to yield and give way before the might of charity.

This miracle took place, as we have said, in 1544. Nearly a hundred years passed away, and God, to whom a thousand years are as one day, vouchsafed to show that He had not forgotten that hour, that prayer, that outpouring of divine love, and that miracle. Of all the men who were living in Rome in 1544, scarcely one will linger in memory after the lapse of a century; while Philip Neri, so poor and humble and hidden from sight in the catacombs, will be glorified by God,

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and glorified precisely in this great miracle of his Pentecost. In the May of 1639, one of the two ribs thus miraculously made to yield at the bidding of divine love in the Catacomb of S. Sebastian, will be borne in triumph into one of the noblest churches of Italy, built in honour of S. Philip by his children, aided by the tender piety of the inhabitants of Naples. This rib, which had been given to the Oratorians of Naples by Pope Urban VIII., at the intercession of his niece Anna Colonna,[1] will be carried in triumphal procession from the palace of the archbishop to the church of the Girolamini. It will be a scene contrasting as strongly with the humility of the saint, as this church of ours, so bright with gold, so rich in marbles and paintings, contrasts with the gloom and damp of the catacombs. At the head of the procession will be a standard painted by the master-hand of Domenichino; all the leading personages of the city will follow, with more than three hundred priests, the seminary, the whole chapter, and the most eminent Cardinal Buoncompagni, archbishop of Naples. A solemn *Te Deum* will be sung by a countless and rejoicing multitude; and the Viceroy with all his court, and all the great officials of the city, will take part in the common joy. And thus this solemn commemoration of Philip's Pentecost, and the honours rendered to his sacred relic show, after the lapse of a hundred years, that the more transcending the love of God is, the more lowly it appears here on earth; and that the very humility of that love is

[1] This noble lady, Anna Colonna, lived in Naples until her marriage with Signor Taddeo Barberini, Prefect of Rome, and nephew of Pope Urban VIII. She was a lady of singular piety, and cherished with great reverence and affection the memory of the Oratorians of Naples, who had been her guides in the spiritual life.

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the only true grandeur, and has in it the germ of an immeasurable glory.[1]

All these wonders were the marks of Philip's destination to a more extended apostolate; and we may therefore pause to consider a fact of the greatest moment in his life, a fact which gave him from that day forward an impress all his own, uneffaced throughout the fifty years he had still to live. One of the visible and abiding effects of Philip's Pentecost was the vehement palpitation of his heart. It seemed at first sight a bodily infirmity, but in reality it was not so. It was a sensible witness of the great charity with which his soul was inflamed, a memorial of the miracle of the catacombs, and an instrument, in the hands of God, of graces and virtues and miracles innumerable. Although it was so sensibly violent, convulsive, and rapid, and attended, moreover, by a difficulty in breathing and an exhaustion of strength, yet it gave him no pain, induced no sadness, nor in any way disturbed the life of the saint. At first some doctors regarded this palpitation as a disease; but it was soon pronounced by the saint's own physicians, Alfonso Catanio and Domenico Saraceni, to be miraculous and supernatural. A great deal was subsequently written about it by Antonio Porto, Ridolfo Silvestri, Bernardino Castellani, Angelo da Bagnorea, and above all by Andrea Cisalpino, a man distinguished for a rare acuteness of intellect, and reputed the most learned physician of his day. All these agree in pronouncing the state of Philip's heart to be the work of God, to give it freedom and space while compelled by the intensity of his love to these violent and even convulsive movements. This is a judgment which was not

[1] Marciani, *Memorie Storiche della Congregazione dell' Oratorio*, tom. ii. lib. i. cap. xiii.

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lightly formed, and which we may accept as wise and prudent, whether we regard the bodily or the spiritual effects of it. Were those effects confined to the body alone, we might hesitate to regard it as supernatural; but its marvellous spiritual workings constrain us to acknowledge in it the direct action of God.

This palpitation was a simple bodily fact, but it had the nearest and most intimate connexion with Philip's soul. Regarded only as a physiological or pathological state, it would not naturally depend on his own will. And yet it is certain that, violent and frequent as it was, it was absolutely under the control of his will, so that he could both induce it and still it when and how he pleased. This is clear from Philip's own words to his very intimate friend, Cardinal Frederic Borromeo: "It is always in my power to stop these movements of my heart when I please; but I do not ordinarily do so, that I may not distract myself from prayer by any deliberate act of my will." The occasion, or the excitement rather, of this palpitation was always some spiritual action which drew his mind and heart nearer to God. And thus it came upon him whenever he was praying, or saying mass, or giving absolution, or speaking in any way of God. It produced at the same time effects on his body and on his soul which were astounding when viewed apart, and still more astounding and impressive when viewed in their mutual relation. Very many witnesses attest that the mere seeing Philip in this state not only awakened in them reverence and awe and a great desire to love God, but produced effects still more divine, and evident to sense. We have said that holy purity is a fruit of divine love, or rather another aspect of it. Now Philip's palpitation, which was caused in him by his unusually vehement charity, had

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a marvellous power to inspire pure and chaste thoughts. It was often enough to draw near to that breast so inflamed and so tumultuously agitated by love; a virtue went forth from it which at once put to flight those terrible temptations which, since the fall of Adam, have such power over our weak nature. We read, moreover, that when he knew any one to be tempted, especially with sensual temptations, he would draw him tenderly to his breast, and so dispel the temptation at once and fill his soul with a sweet serenity and a heavenly peace; that he would from time to time do the same thing to his more intimate friends and disciples, only to increase their fervour and their peace. Tiberio Ricciardelli, a canon of S. Peter's, and Marcello Vitelleschi, canon of S. Mary Major, declare on oath that by only drawing near to the saint's heart their temptations were put to flight; and that they very often had recourse to this remedy of mighty and unfailing efficacy, especially in temptations against holy purity. Were not the thought presumptuous, I would add that this rest and sweetness and serenity, produced in so many by the mere drawing near to Philip's throbbing heart, carries my mind back to our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the disciple whom He loved, and whom He permitted to rest his head upon His Sacred Heart. But such comparison cannot be presumptuous if only we remember the infinite distance which separates our divine Lord from the holiest of His saints, and acknowledge that whatever in them is noble or beautiful or great is but a ray reflected from Him.

To one who looked at this palpitation in its outward manifestation only, without any knowledge of its unwonted and marvellous spiritual effects, it would seem, not unnaturally, a strange and deadly disease. Knowing

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nothing of the expansion of Philip's heart, nor of the overarching of the divided ribs, he would see on the breast only a tumour as large as the fist, baffling and disconcerting the conjectures and reasonings of the physicians. At times the trembling of his whole body, and the swift flow of his blood, made it seem that his heart must burst its way out of his breast. The chair on which he sat would tremble, and the bed on which he lay, and even the whole room in which he was. Sometimes when praying in S. Peter's the large heavy *predella* at which he was kneeling would be shaken violently; when lying on his bed his body would bound into the air; when he drew to his breast the head of any one of his penitents, he would feel as if he had been struck with a vigorous blow; at times his heart would beat with a sound as of a hammer. Its most usual effect was a great heat, not only in the heart itself, but throughout his whole person, so that during all his life he suffered from excess of heat. In youth and in age, in summer and in winter, in his room or in the streets, a glowing fire seemed burning within him. He almost always had his cassock unbuttoned over his heart; at dead of night, in the coldest winter, he was obliged to throw open the windows of his room, that the air might play around him. Sometimes he appeared to suffer from a burning fever; and when the ground was covered with snow, and all were warmly wrapped up, he would be forced to throw open his habit to allay the intolerable heat. When he was a priest and heard confessions, Gregory XIII. ordered that a cotta should always be worn in the confessional; but Philip could not bear it, and got a dispensation for himself from the Pope. So that, in a word, Philip's palpitation manifested itself as a something full of mystery and most difficult to

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pronounce upon. Whenever physicians saw him for the first time they were lost in amazement and perplexity, and Philip went on his simple way, saying often and often: "I pray God that those good men may come to understand my sickness." This was an intimation that he knew that there was no real disease; his delicate humility forbade his speaking more clearly, and this wrong opinion of others admirably served his own purpose of concealment, while it furthered the designs of God in his regard.

The holy love of God had been always most ardent in Philip's soul, and we have indicated the steps of its advance. It increased from day to day, while there were occasions in which it seemed to flame forth with more than its wonted ardour. Such was the moment when in the little church in the cleft of the rock near Gaeta he resolved to forsake all worldly riches, and to seek only the kingdom of God. And in Rome this sacred fire was fed from many sources, by his lonely hidden life, by the manly works of his holy apostolate, by his visits to the seven churches, and by his dwelling in the catacomb of S. Sebastian. But his biographers relate that after this miraculous enlargement of his heart the love of God increased yet more in Philip, so that it could not be hid. As we see in those who truly love some creature of God, that they cannot but speak of the object of their love, and their words are full of warmth and colour and pleasant images, so was it with S. Philip. From the day of this miraculous visitation onwards, it was noticed that his eyes shone with an unwonted brightness, his words were more enkindled and enkindling, and the need of giving expression to his love more imperious, while his deepening humility made him more earnestly desire to conceal it. Hence that

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struggle of love with humility which is one of the most joyous mysteries in the life of the saints, and renders their holiness so attractive. After the miracle of the catacomb, Philip at first strove more earnestly to conceal the fervour of his love; but still from time to time he was heard repeating to himself the words of Holy Scripture: *I languish with love. . . . Stay me up with flowers, compass me about with apples, because I languish with love.* Sometimes his immense love of God seems to him as a net from which he cannot disentangle himself; and so he would apply to God the words a poet uses of earthly love:

> Fain would I learn of you how it is made,
> That net of love which has so many snared.

But if the net of human love be a mystery so inextricable, how much more mysterious must be that love divine, the ardours of which are enkindled by God Himself. Once we are told that Philip was surprised with a vehemence of divine love so extraordinary that he fell to the ground and felt himself at the point of death. Then, recovering himself somewhat, he raised his beaming eyes to heaven and cried aloud: "I cannot bear so much, O Lord, I cannot bear so much; for see, I am dying of it." And as when the storm is over we sometimes see the rainbow set in the glad and peaceful heavens, so was it with the soul of Philip. After this exclamation he felt himself unusually refreshed and consoled; and from that day forward God lessened within him his sensitiveness to the impulses of divine love, that his body might not have too much to suffer. It should be noticed, too, that these and other outbursts of feeling escaped Philip quite unconsciously. Now that his love had taken a sensible form, and was betrayed by weakness, by palpitations and excessive

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heat, he shrank from observation, and hid himself more and more. Thus he almost invariably held a handkerchief over his heart that its tremulous agitation might not be seen; and he contrived that most people should look on him as a sick man, and ascribe the movements of divine love in him to his malady.

And now, though Philip was not essentially changed, he had made a great, a miraculous step onwards in the way of the Lord. It was a giant step, and it determined the form of all his future life. By every indication that form is love, all love, and love alone. True it is that love is the life of every saint; take away love, it is as if you took from the tree its root, or the soul from the body. But in S. Philip there is this notable difference: we find in him an effusion of divine love far more abundant than is strictly necessary to a saint; a certain kind of love, more visible, more fruitful, brighter, and more gentle than we find in other saints; a love which not only inflamed the heart, but flooded the intellect with light, and had its large part in staying the course of the protestant heresy, as well as in reforming the discipline and life of the Church. And even as S. Francis of Assisi bore in his body a token of his most patient humility in the stigmata impressed on him by the angel in Alvernia, so Philip bore about with him a sensible symbol of his charity in the effects of the miracle of the catacomb. The expanded heart and the broken overarching ribs are the stigmata of our S. Philip. The stigmata of S. Francis were the seal which stamped on his body itself the image of Jesus crucified; the stigmata of S. Philip, his large and beating heart, is the seal which stamped upon his body his own proper and distinctive likeness to Jesus, the infinitely loving Saviour of souls.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE TRINITÀ DEI PELLEGRINI.

THE new flame of divine love enkindled in Philip's heart not only united him more closely with God, but drew him with greater force and efficacy of charity towards those creatures of God who are His image and reflexion. The more exultingly his heart bounded within him as he gazed upwards on the divine Beauty, so much the more it was saddened at seeing around him so many souls in whom the image of that Beauty was, by their abuse of free-will, sullied and defaced. And thus Philip could not advance a step in the love of God, without being irresistibly drawn to take a further step in the love of his neighbour. After the miracle of the dilatation of his heart he continued, as before, to go daily to the hospitals to comfort the sick, and to make his rounds amongst the shops and schools, and the porch of S. Peter's, preaching to all the kingdom of heayen, and gaining souls to Christ. But these expressions of his love towards his neighbour, useful and abundant in fruit as they were, did not content him now as they had done before. They did not content him, for charity is not easily soothed to rest; it is like fire which has seized upon a house, and gathers strength every moment, and, if the air of heaven breathe on it, breaks out into a vast conflagration. They did not

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content him, for the state of Christendom, though less wretched now than heretofore, was still very wretched; and the woes of our mother the Church became, in the mercy of God, to him and to others an incentive to ever new labours for the good of souls.

It was the year 1548. The state of the Catholic Church and of Rome its centre was not now so gloomy as it was when, thirty years before, the heresy of Luther sprang up and spread so rapidly and so far. Already the providence of God, in its loving wisdom, had evoked from the very intensity of the evil a longing desire for holy reforms; and much had been done towards a revival of true discipline and ancient piety. The terrible hurricane had swept away the souls that were withered and dead; but the fury of the assault was tempering and strengthening the hearts of many, and throughout the Church there was an unwonted movement of faith, of charity, and of good works, a movement mainly begun by the Pope, the Council, and the saints. As regards the clergy, the work of reform was advancing, slowly indeed but not imperceptibly. Within these thirty years very necessary and wholesome reforms had been effected in the older orders, and new and most useful congregations were springing up in the Church, and attesting its marvellous fecundity. In 1522 Paolo Giustiniani had formed a new congregation of Camaldolese in the lonely desert of Monte Corona. In 1528 the Capuchins had sprung up, to recall the friars of S. Francis to their primitive austerity. In 1524 there arose on the Pincian hill in Rome the new order of Clerks Regular, founded by S. Cajetan; and soon after Girolamo Miano, a senator of Venice and a saint, seeing that Italy was laid waste by continual wars, had charitably received into his

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house a number of orphan boys who had come to Venice as fugitives, and then sold all his possessions, and founded the order of the Somaschi. Three holy priests, Zaccaria, Ferrari, and Morigia, had created in Milan the order of Barnabites, to mitigate by deeds of charity and solid religious instruction the miseries of the time. And lastly, in 1540, Paul III. had approved the new and ever-vigorous Company of the Jesuits. So that in 1548 Philip found the state of the Church greatly improved, and far more hopeful than it was when he first entered Rome.

But these improvements and reforms were not enough to content the desires of the Pope, of Philip, and of the many saints whom God was raising up; nor would they have contented the ardent zeal of our dear saint if they had been a hundredfold greater than they were. Philip was not a priest, and would have thought himself altogether unworthy of a vocation so high; he could not, therefore, think of directly reforming the clergy, and much less of founding a congregation of priests. But, if I am not mistaken, his great charity would naturally turn his thoughts towards the Oratory of the Divine Love in the Trastevere, which is so closely bound up with the life of another great saint of the sixteenth century, S. Cajetan Tiene. Philip's biographers do not tell us whether he knew S. Cajetan, probably because so few records are preserved of his life while he was still young and a simple layman. Certain it is that they were saints worthy of each other, and with many features of resemblance. S. Cajetan could not pray without tears; he cast himself all his life through into the arms of Providence as a child into the arms of its mother; his great desire was *to reform the world without letting it be known that he*

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was in it; points of resemblance in these two saintly souls which honour and endear them both.

But however this may be, it is very probable that when Philip founded in 1548 his Congregation of the Trinità dei Pellegrini, he had in mind the Oratory of Divine Love, and copied it in part, while he enlarged and extended its idea. Ever since the times of Leo X. some of the better Catholics of Rome, priests and laymen, in their desire to stem the torrent of paganism, of immorality, and of misbelief, had been wont to assemble, under the direction of S. Cajetan, in the church of S. Silvester and S. Dorothea, not far from the spot where it is said that S. Peter ministered to the faithful of the earliest age. There they united in prayer, they listened to sermons, and followed other spiritual exercises. The institute thus founded by S. Cajetan soon became famous, especially because among the fifty or sixty of its first members were found the most distinguished men of their time. Besides S. Cajetan there were Contarini, Sadolet, Giberti, and Carafa, all eager for a holy reform; almost all subsequently became cardinals, and Carafa is better known to us as Pope Paul IV. There was also the celebrated writer Lippomani, and Giuliano Buth, the priest of the parish, who was the ostensible head of the institute. In this oratory began, or rather revived, the really old confraternities which spread so rapidly in the Church from that time forward.

S. Philip, then, in concert with Persiano Rosa, his confessor, began on the 16th of August 1548 the Confraternity of Pilgrims and of the Convalescent.[1] Its

[1] It was asserted that this confraternity was not founded by S. Philip, but by Messer Crescenzo Selva of Siena, an assertion disproved by Padre Laderchi in a series of sixteen letters. The writer of a

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members assembled in the church of S. Salvatore in Campo, and their religious exercises were the same as those of the Oratory of Divine Love—the worship of God, prayer, and preaching. What difference there was arose from the very different circumstances of the two founders. S. Cajetan was already a priest, and the friend of Cardinal Carafa and of other personages of distinction, and he had gathered around him the flower of the clergy of his day; Philip was a young secular almost unknown, and he began his confraternity with fifteen persons living in the world, pious indeed, but simple and poor: this was the germ of his grand and magnificent work. When we read that, fifty years later, during the jubilee of 1600, this confraternity entertained in three days 444,500 pilgrims, besides 25,000 women, making up nearly half a million persons, we feel how true it is that in the works of God the many and the great, the mighty and the rich count for little; the chosen and the availing instruments are the few, the humble, and the poor, if only their hearts glow with holy love, and they pour forth around them as a flood the divine energies with which they are filled by Christ.

It has been already said, and with truth, that S. Philip enlarged the idea of the Oratory of Divine Love. The members of the latter met for works of piety alone; while S. Philip not only assembled them for prayer and worship, but employed them in works of broad and universal charity. Their religious exercises

treatise, *Degli studj delle Donne*, tried to make out that Persiano Rosa was its real founder; but this, with many other errors in regard of S. Philip, was satisfactorily refuted by the anonymous writer of a rare tract, the title of which is: *Difesa di alcune proposizioni dei primi scrittori della vita di S. Filippo*, &c. (Bologna, 1740). The question is, however, set at rest by the processes of the saint's canonization, and by the authoritative report of the sacred Rota.

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may seem to us strange, if we remember that Philip was but a layman. Those who met in the church of S. Salvatore, and their numbers rapidly increased, heard mass, frequented the holy Sacraments, joined in various spiritual exercises; but above all, they spoke to each other of God. There is something amazing at first sight in this gathering of a few poor simple men to speak of God in Rome, while all around them there was such corruption, such paganism in life, and letters, and science, and art. This simple and familiar speaking of God is Philip's first manner of preaching. There are no artifices of oratory, no display of knowledge; it is not a conversation or a discussion, as of Plato and Aristotle; only a simple, clear, unadorned speaking of God amongst men who love God; these are the rudiments and beginnings of Philip's preaching. It grew and gathered strength little by little. It yielded much fruit in that little assembly in S. Salvatore; its ample harvest will be gathered later, when he is clothed with the priesthood.

To their usual exercises Philip added one of greater power for good. On the first Sunday of every month, and throughout Holy Week, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed for the Forty Hours' adoration. And this led Philip a step farther; he began to preach publicly in the church. We should have expected that this could not be done without difficulty or opposition. It was a very unusual thing that a layman should speak in the church, especially during exposition of the Blessed Sacrament; but in the case of Philip there was neither surprise nor protest. People knew then, as they know now, that preaching is ordinarily one of the functions of the ministers of the sanctuary, to whom the mission has been given: *Go ye, teach all nations.* But Philip's

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known sanctity, and the wonderful fruit of his exhortations in the streets and public places of Rome, made his preaching in the church appear quite natural; a thing to be not only tolerated, but approved. And so it came to pass that Philip, while still a layman, and apparently without thought of ever being anything else, preached very often in the church of S. Salvatore; and, moreover, that during the Forty Hours' adoration he preached at all times, by day and by night, as our Lord inspired him.

His preaching in the church did not differ much from his exhortations in the streets. He was always the same man; always persuaded that a heart filled with the love of God, and a gentle tenderness of manner, were the means most effectual in converting souls, and leading them on in the way of perfection. His words were not like a swollen torrent sweeping all obstacles from its course, but like a little rivulet flowing gently on, vivifying and gladdening as it flowed. To form an idea of his preaching, we must not think of the mighty and fascinating eloquence of a S. Jerome or a S. Chrysostom, but rather recall the simplicity, the tenderness, the beauty of the Parables, the Sermon on the Mount, or the words that were heard by the lake-side of Gennesareth. We shall see hereafter that Philip, when he had become a priest, adhered to this idea of preaching as best suited to the wants of his time, and in what respects he enlarged and extended it. His preaching in S. Salvatore was most wonderful in its results; none could resist it. He had a special and remarkable power to touch and soften the hardest hearts. In many the slumbering sense of religion and virtue was awakened; others began to understand the inner meaning of that religion of which they had hitherto seen only the outward

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form; others, and these were very many, were so radically changed in heart that they at once forsook the ways of pleasure and of vice, and followed Philip in the way of mortification and of virtue. It is a startling effect of the simple unadorned words of a young layman, that they thus reach down into the lowest depths of the human heart, and change its nature, its tastes, its habits, its affections, its whole life.

The biographers of the saint relate many facts connected with his preaching which are, I think, without parallel in the lives of the saints while they were yet living in the world. Thus, on one occasion thirty young men, merchants and silversmiths, entered the church, drawn probably by curiosity, to hear Philip preach. They were of dissolute life, and their only thought was of what they deemed pleasure. As they listened, the simplicity and unction of Philip's words so affected them that they felt themselves changed into quite other men. All of them were touched and enlightened by the divine grace, came forth from the gloom and foulness of their sins, and entered upon that narrow way, narrow indeed but luminous, which leads to the kingdom of heaven. On many other occasions we read of some who entered the church to mock and jeer this Philip who, though only a layman, acted the priest and preached sermons. They looked and listened, and the smile died away on their lips; their souls were smitten with grief and compunction at memory of their sins; they came to make sport of Philip, and they went away smiting their breasts.

When he had ended his sermon, Philip returned to prayer. During the exposition in S. Salvatore he ordinarily passed the whole night in prayer, summoning those whose turn it was to keep watch before the

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Blessed Sacrament; and as he rang his little bell he would say: "now your hour of prayer is finished; but the time for doing good is not finished yet." Philip's time for doing good was every moment and every action of his life. To live and to do good—sublime and perfect definition of our end on earth which our Lord has taught us all, and which these words of S. Philip bring back so forcibly to our minds. All other definitions compared with this seem to me to dwarf and dishonour man most miserably.

Such were Philip's works of piety in his confraternity of S. Salvatore in Campo. Nor were his works of charity less useful or less noble. Of all forms of human sorrow, there is none which touched the heart of Jesus with such compassion as sickness. As we read the Gospels, it seems as if a large part of His life were passed among the sick. They were always the objects of His most tender commiseration, as of His most wonderful works. Whether we find Him in Nazareth, or at the lake of Gennesareth, or in Judea, in the highways and in the temple, or on the slopes of the Mount of Beatitudes, still and always the sick are thronging round Him, worshipping Him, beseeching Him, and receiving from Him healing and a ready pardon. And hence it is that to us christians the state of sickness is in so many respects precious, and the sick are objects of our veneration and our love. As a true follower of Christ, Philip held the sick especially dear. In their bodily sufferings he was skilled to detect the sickness of soul so often connected with them; and he saw in those sufferings not so much the punishment as the remedy of sin, not so much the sentence of death as the drawing on of that moment when the soul must leave the body on earth, and appear

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before Christ its Creator and Redeemer. From the time of his arrival in Rome to the end of his life, the sick, especially the destitute sick in the hospitals, found him always at their side. At first he contented himself with spending a part of his days in the hospitals; but very soon he hired a small house near S. Salvatore, and founded, in connexion with the confraternity dei Pellegrini, a small hospital for convalescents, in which he took great delight. He founded it for convalescents rather than for the sick, because it very often happened that those who had been discharged from the various hospitals as cured were so weak and sickly, that they fell back into a state worse than before. Thus Philip found a new way of exercising his charity, and also of making the care of the sick one of the works of his confraternity. He did not give up his visits to the hospitals, but he loved this new foundation with an especial love, because it seemed to him so adapted to the wants of Rome, and because it gave substance and form to his cherished plan of combining in one institute works of charity with works of piety.

But the great heart of our saint and his ever-abounding charity, together with the state of the Church at the time and the very aspect of Rome, stamped as it is with the impress of its catholicity, urged Philip to found in Rome an institute which should bear fruit in every part of the Church, which should be a work of charity to both soul and body, and serve to enlighten the minds of those who were in error by its manifestation of christian love. The near approach of the Jubilee of 1550 was as a ray of light which led him on to the foundation of that vast and amazing institute of charity which was called the work of the

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Pellegrini, and which in the end gave its name to the Confraternity of S. Salvatore.

Her sons come to Rome from all parts of the world, because all christians look on Rome as the mother of the world redeemed by Christ. And those who come are rightly called pilgrims, for a pilgrim, in the christian sense of the word, is one who visits a holy place from motives of piety; and no place, after the Holy Land, can be so holy to us as Rome. They come from lands that are far off as well as from those that are near; they speak many languages, their habits and customs are different; but all have one common faith and one common love, all are children of one common father, the Pope; there are among them rich and poor, but far more poor than rich. Now Philip's plan was this—to receive and lodge poor pilgrims when they came to Rome for the Jubilee, or from any other pious motive; to supply their wants, to welcome them, serve them, provide them with food and shelter, would, he thought, be not only a great work of charity and a mighty means of spiritual good to the pilgrims themselves, but a grand and hitherto unknown example of charity to the whole world. When heretics were maliciously exaggerating the vices of Rome, defaming with hateful calumnies the eternal city of Christ and of His Vicar; while they were branding it with the title of the great harlot, the mother of all abominations; the example of a charity so vast and compassionate and tender, of christians in Rome making themselves poor and lowly in order to serve and aid their unknown brethren in Christ, would have greater force than the weightiest and most luminous arguments in crushing falsehood and opening the eyes of heretics to the truth.

And now we have reached the year 1550; and Philip

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still a layman, quietly set himself to work to show charity towards the thronging pilgrims, as only a saint can show it. The aged Pontiff Paul III. had died in 1549, and was succeeded early in 1550 by that Cardinal del Monte who was, as we have seen, one of the three legates who presided at the opening of the Council of Trent. The newly elected Pope convoked the Council anew at Trent, for it had been transferred to Bologna, and then its sittings had been suspended; and he also directed his especial attention to the Jubilee. The Jubilee is the year in which, according to long established custom, the Church invites her children to Rome, that they may by penance and prayer gain the great indulgence. On the 24th February 1550 Pope Julius III. proclaimed the Jubilee, and with the accustomed solemnities opened the *porta santa*, the sacred door of S. Peter's, which remains always closed except during this year of grace. On the same day the Pope held a Congregation of Cardinals, at which the Dean of the Sacred College was deputed to open the *porta santa* of S. John Lateran, and other most reverend[1] cardinals to perform the same ceremony at S. Mary Major's and S. Paul's. And as the Emperor Charles V. and Philip his son requested that they might be allowed to gain the indulgence of the Jubilee without coming to Rome, the Pope by special brief granted their petition.[2] It does not appear in the records of the time that there was any unusual concourse of pilgrims at the Jubilee of 1550, but their number was naturally very great. The one memorable and unusual thing was the great work so bound up with the life of S. Philip. The poor did

[1] The cardinals had still at this time the title of *Reverendissimo*; that of *Eminentissimo* was adopted somewhat later.

[2] Raynald. Annal. ad an. 1550.

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not come to that Jubilee, as had been usual, uncertain and anxious how they were to provide for themselves, begging their daily bread, and suffering from privation and discomfort. On their arrival in Rome they found a home, where they were welcomed and tended by Philip and some others with the most provident charity. It had been hired for this very purpose; and as it was soon found too small for its many guests, another and a larger house was taken in addition. It was a beautiful thing to see Philip and his companions welcome and embrace the poor and weary pilgrims as they arrived, cheer them after the toils and discomforts of their journey, wait on them with tender solicitude, set food before them, make their beds, and with loving words, as well as by their example, quicken and excite the piety of all. And it was beautiful, too, to see these poor pilgrims, who had come from afar to confess their sins and do penance in Rome, confounded and amazed at such unwonted and unexpected charity. Day by day their numbers went on increasing until they became a great multitude. But as their numbers increased, the ardour of Philip's charity increased too; he was all things to all, and as a special providence to each. And meanwhile the example of this great charity produced fruit more precious and more abundant than he had dared to hope. The fame of the confraternity of the Pilgrims spread far and wide throughout Christendom; multitudes asked to be inscribed amongst its members, and many more were moved to show the same humble charity to the pilgrims as Philip did. Though of these many were of high rank, princes, priests, and prelates, no one deemed it a derogation from his rank to place himself under the direction of this poor and lowly layman, and do just what Philip bade him do. In a

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word, this was the first work of our saint which called forth universal admiration and even amazement, and which at the same time revealed the mighty power of attraction there was in him. Philip himself was struck with wonder, and I can imagine that his humility was somewhat disconcerted and alarmed. He meant to cast into the ground a little seed of charity, and before him was a great tree, full grown and stately, sprung up he knew not how. And henceforward we shall see that this is the most distinctive peculiarity of Philip's holiness, that he means, in his humility, only to sow here and there some little seed of good and do some little thing, and that the harvest is almost embarrassing in its abundance, and the works both immense and lasting.

The confraternity of the Pilgrims grew and advanced in two ways. First, some of its earliest members became saints. Of one of them, for instance, we are told that if he raised his eyes to the starry sky he was rapt in ecstasy, so intense was his yearning desire of heaven, and so eloquent to his soul the creatures of God. Of another we read that he foretold with perfect certainty the day and the hour of his death, and bade his sister take note of his words. The first of these was only a cook, the second was probably one of the poor. The confraternity went on growing in numbers and in importance. As the numbers of the sick increased, as well as the concourse of pilgrims, it was transferred from S. Salvatore in Campo into the spacious house of the Trinità dei Pellegrini, where it still remains. Its importance was greatly increased during subsequent jubilees. In 1575 the multitude of those who wished to wait on the pilgrims was immense. Day by day might be seen, engaged in these services of

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christian charity and humility, lords and even ladies of the highest rank, bishops, cardinals, and the holy Father himself, Pope Gregory XIII. The Jubilee of 1600 offered the same touching spectacle; Pope Clement VIII. was frequent in his attendance, and shrank from no service of the poor, however lowly. Pope Urban VIII., in 1625, and after him Pope Innocent X., continued this tradition of loving humility; in a word, this great charity was never neglected in Rome, and has always produced the most wonderful effects. Again and again we read of heretics so edified and overcome by the affection with which they were welcomed and tended, that they abjured their errors and cast themselves into the arms of their mother, the Church of God.

Even here, in Naples, the desire arose to copy the example of this great institute, and as there were no pilgrims to be cared for, the idea of the hospital was greatly enlarged. Here, too, works of piety and of worship were joined with works of charity, for our first founders had seized the primary and fundamental idea of the saint. Our confraternity dei Pellegrini is one of the most numerous and famous in Naples. S. Philip is with us not in name only; amongst our members there flows still a stream of charity, especially in regard of the care of the sick, which is fed from his heart. In order to deserve their name of *Filippini*, they have no need to be priests and fathers in Philip's congregation; they live in the world, and his example while he lived in the world, is to them imitable and even easy. Let them reflect it always, and their memory will be in benediction.

In speaking of the great charity with which our saint served the pilgrims, I have omitted to say that

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he felt a peculiar joy in washing their feet, and that his example was followed by all who took part in this service. I omitted it purposely, because I wished to speak more in detail of this work, which is precious in my eyes beyond many others, and to set forth its spiritual significance. This washing of the feet recalls to my mind the Magdalen washing the feet of Jesus with her tears, and Jesus Himself washing His disciples' feet, to prepare them for the institution of the Holy Eucharist, and the ineffable mystery of the cross. The washing of the feet has a very deep significance in christian morality; it expresses not charity alone, nor humility alone, but both charity and humility fused into one. In the days of our Lord, and even in the days of Philip, it was not only a most grateful refreshment, it was also a service of profoundest humility. It thus expresses and consecrates in Christendom an humble charity, that humility of charity which separates christians by an almost infinite distance from those philanthropists who act from nature alone, and which is at once our motto, our grandeur, and our glory.

To wash the feet was in old times the work of slaves alone; now it is the glory and honour of the Christian to wash the feet even of the poor. I can picture to myself Philip bending, in the greatness of his charity, over the feet of the poor and toil-worn pilgrim, washing them, drying them, and then affectionately kissing them, thanking our Lord the while for having deemed him worthy to follow His example, and to become the slave of His love to His brethren. I can see the great ones of the earth and the prelates of the Church imitating the charity of a poor secular; and popes such as Gregory and Clement and Urban and

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Innocent, bowing their august heads, and abasing the supreme majesty of the tiara, to do the work of slaves; and I ask myself, who is there so insensible to the heavenly beauty of humility as to worship pride? This is, alas, the mystery of our corrupted nature, that no light of truth, of love, or holy example, can quite dispel the darkness in which sin has wrapped our minds. But however men may allow themselves to be blinded and led astray by the haughty vanity of the world, it is a grand thing that these examples of the humility of charity are never wanting; that the significance of the works of the Church and her saints should be clearly set forth; that we should be taught to feel what precious advantages the poor confer on us in that they give us occasion to practise the noblest virtues; and, moreover, how great they are in the sight of God. Not only is their's the kingdom of heaven, but to love them and do them good is the kingdom of heaven to the rich and the mighty, to priests and pontiffs. These things our Lord has taught us indeed, but Philip deepens for us with his example the meaning, and widens for us the application of this teaching, not only by what he did, but by the spirit in which he did it; he awakens and rouses our drowsy hearts to feel its unutterable beauty. And we shall see that throughout his life Philip most especially loved this humble charity, and that it was not enough for him that his charity should be humble so far forth as it must be in order to be true; he would have it humble far beyond this, so humble that at times it seems to an unpractised eye to be very little, when it is in truth immeasurably great.

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE LAST YEAR BEFORE PHILIP'S PRIESTHOOD.

THUS far in the life of our saint we meet with no miracles, except the great miracle wrought on his own person in the catacomb. We have gone lovingly along with him for thirty-five years and have seen great things; but they are rather marvels of virtue and of love than miracles strictly so called. Of all that we have related, the plan and the reasons are high and secret, but still there is always some ray of light, some clue to guide our investigations. God almost invariably prepares His servants for wielding dominion over the laws of this visible nature by training them to an absolute dominion over themselves. The servant of God does not, as a rule, work miracles until his life begins to be itself a miracle, so that all danger of pride being gone, he is so transformed into Christ that the mighty working of Christ finds in him no impediment. When the words are true of a saint: *I no longer live, but Christ liveth in me,* then we begin to see the almighty power of our Lord in the servant of His predilection. And before entering upon the wide field of Philip's miracles, it will not be altogether useless to say a few words on christian miracles in general.

S. Thomas teaches us that a miracle is a new creation. It is always God who works it by His almighty

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power, and often some elect creature is His instrument. Even granting that what we call the laws of nature are in themselves unchangeable, the possibility of miracles remains intact. No one who admits creation out of nothingness can reasonably refuse to the Creator the power of effecting those new and particular creations which we call miracles.

But it is of greater moment to consider miracles as they stand related to the mystery of the Incarnation, and of the Redemption of the human race. The Incarnation, which is of itself enough to save us all, is the miracle above all miracles, and every particular miracle is only one of the manifold and sensible manifestations of that unapproachable and abiding fact by which the world is redeemed. Nor is this all; the miracles wrought by the saints are only the fruit and effect of the Incarnation, with which they are so inseparably bound up; and they are, moreover, a part of that great appliance and appointment of means by which our Lord bestows on earth the merits of His redemption, and restores the order which sin had deranged. Even as grace, and the Holy Sacrifice, and the Sacraments have their roots in the Incarnation, and are the ordinary instruments of human redemption, so miracles are extraordinary instruments, and in the general order of things not less necessary. If we look at miracles in this light, we see why they were more numerous when religion was in its infancy, and the ordinary action of Christ on the souls of men was as yet less living and efficacious; and why they became fewer where the faith once established had not so great need of supernatural manifestations. And we see, too, why in dark and troubled times of the Church's history, when the world needed to be christianized

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anew, God has in His mercy and wisdom marked the times of His visitation by an outburst of miraculous power. So it was in the sixteenth century; and thus the many miracles wrought by Philip have a manifest reason and motive in the mournful and disordered state of the Church and of society when he began his apostolate in Rome.

And then, if we turn to the credibility of the miracles of the saints, without engaging in minute and subtle inquiries into this or that particular miracle, which may very well be untrue without entitling us to conclude that all are untrue; it is important to note that in the lives of the saints the natural and the supernatural facts rest on the evidence of the same witnesses. It is neither reasonable nor just to rend the closely woven web of facts, all equally authentic, and to accept some while we reject others. Moreover, the natural and the supernatural facts are so connected and interwoven with each other, that if we accept only the former we find ourselves in presence of an insolvable enigma. How can a catholic writer take away from the life of a saint the poetry, the beauty, and the fragrance with which the supernatural and the miraculous impregnate it? Rather let us bless God and humble ourselves while we relate the miracles of our saints, as we bless God and humble ourselves before the perennial miracle of the preservation of the universe. Surely we, who have had some experience of the miracles wrought within us by grace, cannot hesitate before the outward and visible miracles of the saints, which are far less great in themselves than the inward and invisible, and are indeed only their echo or reflection.

The life of Philip Neri is bright with the lustre of many miracles, and we now come upon the earliest of

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them. After what I have said, I will narrate them to my readers with the same ingenuous simplicity with which the contemporaries of the saint recounted them to their's. I have not the power, and certainly I have not the wish, to apply to each one of them the severe and sceptical criticism which is now unhappily so much in favour. Even could I do so, what would it avail? To satisfy a certain class of persons, and to be quite logical, one must efface even the miracles related in the Gospels. As to my Catholic readers, I know that too many of them, especially if they affect culture of mind, habitually breathe the unwholesome air of naturalism, and are conscious of an unwelcome effort in accepting miracles. I would remind them that this is one of the many miseries of our time, and that men of strong mind should vigorously and peremptorily withstand it. He who believes in the miracle of the creation and preservation of the universe, and in the ever wakeful providence of God, should surely not shrink from believing certain manifestations of His all-powerful mercy, when the effects of those manifestations are great, and distinctly visible. I would remind them, too, that except the miracles which have been affirmed in the canonization of a saint, and on which the Church has set the stamp of its authority after most rigid examination, she does not require us to receive them all with an unquestioning assent. The miracles related in the life of S. Philip were all of them affirmed by most trustworthy and contemporary witnesses, most of them giving evidence on oath. Even should it seem to any one that in this or that word or act of the saint they saw a miracle where there was none, we may feel absolutely certain that not one of these witnesses stated what he did not firmly believe. And this is enough to

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enable us to read the record of these miracles with affectionate reverence, and to find in them ever-fresh reasons to glorify God who is so *wonderful in His saints.*

We have seen the great charity of Philip as shown in the conversion of sinners, the care of the sick, and the receiving pilgrims; and now it reveals itself to us in an aspect even more beautiful and winning, if we remember his position. He was absolutely poor, voluntarily poor. It would hardly seem likely that others should intrust much money to him for charitable uses while he was living in the world; and yet his almsgiving was profuse and constant. When he relieved the distresses of others, he showed a certain exquisite delicacy of charity which only the very noblest souls could feel. His charity was always modest and shrinking, hiding itself as if it were ashamed to be seen. He gave in the spirit of the words of our divine Lord: *When thou dost alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth.*

Both Gallonio and Bacci tell us that at this time of his life he very often deprived himself of sleep, that he might go to the house of some poor person, by night and unseen, and relieve his wants. In 1550 he heard that an old man of noble birth was in extreme want; he was touched with compassion, and resolved to supply his need. He was sure that the gentleman would feel ashamed at being known to be as poor as he really was, and therefore he decided to aid him secretly. So at dead of night he left his room, and set out with money and food for the impoverished gentleman. In the Via dell' Orso he drew quickly back to avoid a carriage which was passing rapidly along, and in so doing fell into a deep excavation which had been made for

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the foundations of a house. There seemed no way of escape; and then it pleased God to fulfil literally in his regard the promise of the Psalm: *He hath given His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways: in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.* Suddenly there shone around Philip a great light, and in it he saw an angel of God, who took him up by the hair of his head, and set him on his way again unharmed by his fall. The heavenly vision then disappeared, and the saint blessed God for this revelation of the worth and power of holy charity. This miracle is attested on oath by Cardinal Baronius. Philip himself related to two priests a similar miracle. One day he felt his heart inflamed with an unwonted charity, together with an irresistible impulse to express that charity by an alms to some poor man, who might be to him the representative of our divine Lord. He looked about, but found no one; and then God sent an angel to appear to Philip in a human form, as a poor man. Philip gave him an alms with singular gladness of heart, and the angel then vanished suddenly as a vision, and it seemed to Philip like a dream. From that day the saint understood more clearly what a treasure lies hid in voluntary poverty, and loved the poor with a greater love. The thought of the poor was ever after associated in his mind with the angel who had appeared to him, and he penetrated more deeply into the mystery of Jesus, *who for our sakes became poor.*

Nor was his charity only increased by the new light thus shed on it; it became thenceforward more intelligent, more laborious and manifold. He not only gave alms, but he gave with a wise and prudent thoughtfulness. He relieved many women in order to help them against the temptations suggested to them by their

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helpless poverty; he seeks out young men, and if he sees that they are disposed to study, he aids them with money, and buys them books; he gives his own clothes to those who have none; if he finds any persons who wish to consecrate themselves to God in the religious life, he first tests their spirit, and then gives them what is necessary; he finds his way even into the prisons, and cheers the prisoners with his sympathy as well as with his alms. He made it a rule never to refuse anything to the poor, and this rule often compelled him to painful sacrifices. Once, for instance, he was told of a woman who was almost entirely unprovided with clothing; he at once sent her his own cassock. No one could conjecture where Philip, poor as he was and with such contempt for money, found resources for so many acts of great charity, and all were amazed to see that day by day the range of his charity widened. And so, little by little, there grew up around him a family of poor, who, together with the sick and the pilgrims, are the crown and the glory of his life as a secular.

And now there suddenly sprang up within him a feeling which, though it had its root in charity, disquieted him greatly. It was a doubt, a shadow which clouded the pure light of his intellect, and perplexed him. He begins to doubt whether it is better for him to continue the laborious life he is living, or to withdraw into perfect solitude, and live alone on holy love and prayer. It may seem to us now strange that such a doubt could disturb one who was doing so much good; but it is a doubt we meet with often in the lives of the saints. Thus we find it at times in the life of S. Peter Damian, when he was edifying the world by his laborious episcopate; and the reason is this. The more good the saints do, the more they love God; and

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the more they love God, the more their hearts long to live for Him alone in love and prayer, without the distractions of the outer world, and even of those works of charity which bring them into contact with it. Perhaps, too, as their love increases, so does their anxiety to be quite sure that it is the will of God they should be serving Him thus, rather than in another way. Nor do they fear that they will thus be doing less good to their neighbour, because they believe that they can do more good by their prayers than by their works, or because in their great humility they cannot or will not see the good they are effecting; or because if they do see it, they look on it as the Lord's doing, and on themselves as only marring and hindering His work. And then, in the active life, besides the many perils of sin, the creature is but too often a clog on the soul when it would rise towards God; while it seems as though a life of contemplation would give us wings to soar upwards to Him, and find untroubled rest in Him.

But to return to Philip—when he found himself disquieted by this harassing doubt, he not only asked counsel from man, but sought and awaited light from the Lord. He lifted up the eyes of his mind to God, he fed and fanned the flame of holy charity in his heart, he prayed long and more fervently, and at length God spoke clearly and marvellously to him. It was the dawn of a day in 1550, and the first rays of the sun were just touching the tops of the distant mountains, and Philip had been long in prayer that he might know what was the will of God in this perplexed and doubtful question. In the fervour of his prayer, and while *his heart was hot within him*, his eyes were miraculously strengthened to see the form of a man whom he recog-

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nized by many signs as S. John the Baptist, the saint so dear to the Florentines. At this appearance, which lasted but a few moments, and at his own interior certainty that he was in presence of the great Precursor of Christ, Philip was rapt in ecstasy, and his heart throbbed with unwonted agitation. A torrent of heavenly delights poured into his soul; no voice reached his ear, nor was voice needed; what he sees, what he feels, are quite enough to clear his intellect of every doubt, and to give him a firm conviction that God did not will that he should live in solitude, but should give himself to a life of unresting activity for the salvation of souls.

This inner voice of conscience spoke at that moment to Philip more particularly still. He himself told Cardinal Frederic Borromeo that then he knew that it was the will of God that he should live in Rome for the good of souls, and live there in poverty and utter detachment from worldly things. Not long afterwards, this conviction of the will of God in his regard was confirmed by another sign. One day, while he was at prayer, he saw before him two souls of the blessed. As he looked it seemed to him that one of the two held in his hands a roll of bread, and appeared to be eating it. No words were spoken, but as he was earnestly beseeching God to unfold to him the mystery of the vision, an inner voice spoke to his heart: "By this I signify to thee My will that thou shouldest live in Rome, for the good of souls, as though thou wert living in a desert, abstaining, so far as shall be given thee, from the use of meat." This vision gladdened Philip's heart, and gave him clearer light on his way. Henceforward he felt such certainty about the will of God concerning him, that throughout his life no faintest

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shade of doubt ever again disquieted his soul. Blessed was he who could go on his way with this fulness of security! Still more blessed in that his doubt was dispersed and lost in the clear shining of the everlasting Light! Surely this is that christian wisdom which scatters all our doubts; not the yielding at once to the desires of our own hearts, good though they be in themselves, but the rising above ourselves to God and asking: *what wouldest Thou have me to do?*

These two miraculous visions gave Philip not only an unclouded certainty in regard of the apostolate into which he had been gradually and unconsciously led, but a great increase of zeal and activity. Still the hour was drawing on when God would require of him something far higher; he was soon to be a priest. It must strike us that in neither of the two visions which gave Philip so great confidence and peace, was there even the faintest intimation of the very great change so soon to come over his life. It is abundantly clear that, neither before them nor after them, the most distant presentiment of it had come to him. After them he went on as before, living in the world, striving towards his own perfection, and doing good to others. The thought of the priesthood would seem never to have crossed his mind; had it occurred to him, he would in his humility have deemed it presumptuous, and would have shrunk from it as a child shrinks back from an attempt, noble indeed, but beyond his strength. The whole ambition of Philip, at the close of the thirty-fifth year of his life, was to live mixed up and lost in the crowd of men, poor and amongst the poor; to do some little good in the most hidden way, unnoticed by the world; in hope that from all this there might come some profit to the Church of God.

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But with his thirty-sixth year came an unexpected change. It was in 1551, the second year of the pontificate of Julius III. Persiano Rosa, a most holy priest, who was Philip's confessor, all at once bade him change the life he had hitherto led, and consecrate himself to God's service in the priesthood. Philip was much disturbed and perplexed by this proposal; he shrank back appalled by the dread responsibilities of the priestly ministry, and he refused at once. He supported his refusal with reasons of every kind; the special pleading of humility in a saint is never at a loss for these. The heavenly and immeasurable grandeur of the christian priesthood on the one hand, and the equally immeasurable depth of man's unworthiness on the other, supply arguments enough to induce the man who knows and loves God to shrink from all distinction and pre-eminence, and especially from the priesthood. Only the unquestioned command of God, that command we call a vocation, can with justice compel a man to accept the great burden and office of representing in his own person the perfect and holy priesthood of Christ. Now Philip had not received this clear and explicit command. It had not been given him as yet either directly by God, or by S. John, or by the two blessed spirits he had seen in vision, nor by his own confessor. It was quite natural and right, therefore, that he should doubt and hesitate before submitting to the decision of Persiano Rosa. And this was the more natural that, from the time when Philip gave himself to God in S. Germano, he had never thought of anything higher than a life in the world, employed for his own sanctification and the good of the Church. But Almighty God overruled this refusal to high ends. He willed that Philip should not lack

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the grace of measuring the full grandeur of the priesthood, and of declining it in his humility. He had refused wealth and all pleasures however innocent; he had given up his studies for the love of God; and now he must make this last sacrifice, the refusal of the christian priesthood. It was a refusal of another kind, but such as only a noble soul can rightly make, a soul which so feels the awful dignity of the priesthood as to deem it fitter for angels than for men. And herein, too, we find in Philip another feature of resemblance to the humble S. Francis of Assisi, who so persistently refused, together with all the good things of this world, the dignity of the christian priesthood.

Persiano Rosa, however, was so strongly convinced that Philip would do immense good as a priest, that he persisted in his counsel, and enforced his compliance by a command. Philip could not but regard this persistence and this command as indications of the will of God, and obeyed. It is a grand example of obedience, in a matter of extreme gravity, and in opposition to his own wishes and judgment. Obedience had been always the unobtrusive habit of his will; but now it comes forth and shows itself in a crowning act of submission. And God rewarded it instantly and abundantly, giving him such confidence and peace that he never again doubted that this was the will of God concerning him. And here we may observe that God did not manifest to Philip this His will by visions, nor by special answer to prayer, but by the ordinary way of obedience to his confessor; teaching us that in the choice of a state of life no one can be a better judge than he who has the care of our conscience, and who knows us and judges us with truer knowledge and surer judgment than any other.

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Thus this year decided Philip's future life; it closed one period of it and it opened another. In this year he saw the abundant fruit of the Confraternity dei Pellegrini, all the works of his charity received a great expansion, and he himself was enlightened and cheered by heavenly visitations. In this year the old longing for a solitary life revived, and in obedience he became a priest. Here begins a new life for Philip, a new and grand step in the ascent of his soul towards God, worthy of our serious study. He will not be substantially different from the Philip he has been hitherto. Few men have ever been so whole and complete, so consistent with themselves; and very few have borne, as Philip did, the impress stamped on them in their youth, unchanged all along even to extreme age. The field of his labours becomes larger far, and the saint himself becomes greater and more striking. The sun which has hitherto touched with its light one part of his character only will now irradiate it on all sides, and set him forth in fuller splendour. And as a tree, if the earth be changed and cleared around it, strikes its roots deeper, clothes itself with new strength, spreads its branches wider, and puts forth fairer flowers and yields richer fruit, so was it with Philip when he had received the grace of the priesthood.

But let us never lose sight of the fair and graceful figure of Philip as a secular; for, in some respects, it wins and attaches our hearts more than even his grandeur and more imposing presence as a priest. And, in truth, I know not how to tear myself away from him, so great a joy is it to dwell in thought on the image of that youth, so holy, so gracious, and so comely, who brings before us so vividly the likeness of Jesus on earth. If you, my reader, are living in the

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world, do you above all others pause with me yet a moment to look once more at that endearing image, and bear with my regret in leaving it. Be you man or woman, old or young, married or unmarried, Philip may be to you the archetype and mould of your life. He had not, it is true, the cares of a family, nor did he hold any of the civil or social offices of the world; he was not a magistrate, nor an advocate, nor anything else of that kind. And yet he has left us an example which is not only enough to order our private and personal life in holiness, but, moreover, to christianize family life, and all the offices a man can hold. See what a treasury of virtues in the years of his boyhood in Florence. Set him before you in the fervour of his life at S. Germano. Weigh well the heroism of that first refusal of wealth. Try to imitate the recollectedness, the piety, and the fervour of his life in the catacombs. Follow him especially in his love of the sick and the poor; and though you may live in the world, you will be christians after God's own heart.

The Church has canonized many saints who lived in the world; but I know none who offers to christians a type of sanctity so beautiful and so suited to our own time. Putting aside the martyrs, it has been remarked that many of the confessors have been kings, as if God would display the power of His grace and the virtue of the Cross in sanctifying that most difficult state of christian life, and teach us at the same time that civil society must be founded in justice and truth, and be most closely united with Christ. With the exception, then, of kings, whose position gave them an immense social influence, other secular saints have ordinarily sanctified some one particular office or calling, and generally the state of marriage and the christian

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family. A type of holiness so universal as was Philip has been seen but seldom, if indeed ever. In the first place, Philip does not order his secular life so as to be a preparation for the priesthood, as many saints have done; from the beginning he has no other thought than of living his life to the end in the world. Nor did he ever think of family life, or of any particular state which he might christianize and sanctify. Although the thought of solitude and of the desert charmed him, and at times almost seduced him, yet he never betook himself to any solitary mountain, never thought of hiding himself away in his beloved catacombs. He lives as a layman, in the midst of Rome; without care or thought of the world, yet not idle, for idleness he shunned as a pestilence. He had no one determinate office, that he might leave us a type of life which may serve in all offices. He lived in the midst of Rome, with the ideal of a true lay apostolate clear in his mind, and realized to perfection in his life. Like every true apostolate, his has its inspiration in a great love of God, and therefore stoops to creatures, and would save them. It looks both at the body and the soul; and if it seems at times to turn itself more immediately and with greater energy to the body, it is only that it may more readily and surely reach the soul. It is an apostolate which, though not sacerdotal, wields the arms of every true apostolate; the word which heals the soul, and the charitable care which heals, or relieves, or soothes the body. It is an apostolate copied from the ministry of Jesus, who, as He went about the Holy Land, enlightened men's minds with His word, and with the charity of His miracles healed their bodies.

I do not say that Philip's work as a layman was a new thing, but that it took in him a new form, and so

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stands out in strong relief. It was a work peculiarly suited to the new times which began in the sixteenth century with the close of the middle ages, with the progress of letters and science, and with the terrible hurricane of the protestant revolt. And since great men know not only their own times, but the germs they contain of the times yet to come; since the end of their life is to bring those germs to maturity and to render them fruitful; I think that Philip looked far in advance of his own generation, and wrought a work much suited to these days of ours, and most worthy of imitation by us, for our century is the offspring of the sixteenth, and in many ways closely resembles it. Since, then, in these our times seculars have acquired a degree of culture, often superficial but generally extensive, it befits them to use their attainments for the defence of the true religion generally, and especially to show the profound and most beautiful accord between religion and civilization. Let christians who live in the world follow the example of Philip, by speaking words like rays of sacred light, in families, in social gatherings, in friendly converse, through the press. Those words of truth and love and peace which Philip uttered in the shops and by the wayside, in the hospitals, and in the church of S. Salvatore, are now scattered far and wide by good and cultured christians by means of the press. Let them not look on this as a work of supererogation; it is their simple duty. The faith they profess is given them not merely to hold, but to defend against all comers. At a time when culture is so widely diffused; when every science, every new discovery, every advance in material civilization, is too often turned against Christ, it is the bounden duty of the christian laity to speak of Christ, to reflect on others the light which

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cheers their own souls, to trace out and exhibit the great mystery of that union between the finite and the Infinite of which the Incarnation is the highest expression.

And since the charity which does good, when it comes from the heart and is nourished by the love of God, is a speech more eloquent far than that which the hand writes and the press diffuses, christians who live in the world are at this time especially bound to utter it largely and continually. Of this Philip gives us a great and unapproachable example, an example which is so constraining because his charity drew its nourishment from the holy love of God. Without this vivifying love, our charity is dead. For lack of this so much of the charity of our day is vain, petty, timid, full of self-seeking; it makes no ventures, it does not attract, it has no root of perseverance. And hence the charity of the present day relieves indeed many distresses of the body, but neither enlightens the mind nor warms the heart, nor does it work the wonderful conversions of which we read in times past; in a word, it contributes little or nothing to the spiritual life of either the giver or the receiver.

Could I hope that this imperfect sketch of the life of a saint living in the world might persuade some one at least of my readers to set before himself as an example the life and work of Philip while yet a secular, I should be happy in the thought that I have not laboured all in vain; and this thought would inspire me with courage and with trust for what still remains to be accomplished of my pilgrimage on earth.

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BOOK II.

PHILIP A PRIEST.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST YEAR OF PHILIP'S PRIESTHOOD—HIS TWO FIRST DISCIPLES IN S. GIROLAMO.

Now that I have reached this point in the life I am narrating, I feel as one who, after toiling painfully towards the summit of some lofty mountain, sees it still far above him, and who rests awhile and looks around him. At the height he has reached the air is fresh and pure, the light more cheering, the horizon vast, and the sky above him clear, translucent, and unfathomably deep. And yet he knows that, as he climbs, that horizon will be broader still; while the plain beneath, the trees, the houses, the men, and all that he has left below, will dwindle as he rises, and sink into insignificance. Such is now the state of my mind. Having gone thus far with S. Philip Neri from his boyhood to his priesthood, I feel as if he had been drawing me after him step by step to a commanding height. But how far have we still to climb, if we would follow him in the steps of his ascent to that crowning point of perfection which he reached at the end of his pilgrimage! Still whatever the difficulties of the way, we will try to follow him; and although

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the things I have to relate may often seem too high for such as we are, yet we shall find them always elevating, always full of love and of consolation. Let us, then, set out again on our way, and do thou, my dearest Philip, come to me in aid of my insufficiency, and uphold me with thy hand, a father's hand, when that way is steep and rough!

In the year 1551, a year of wars to Italy, Philip was ordained priest. He had no need of long training for so high an office. It was towards the end of 1550, and perhaps even later, that the priesthood was first mentioned to him, and in the middle of the following year we find him already a priest. For although his previous life had not been intentionally ordered towards the priesthood, it had been one long preparation for it; it may be regarded as the complete exhibition in act of that kind and measure of priesthood which there is in every christian soul. As regards his studies, it does not appear that he needed to refresh his memory by going over what he had done before; so thorough was the training of his earlier years in literature, philosophy, and theology. Giovanni Lunelli, bishop of Sebaste, was therefore commissioned by Filippo Archinto, bishop of Saluzzo and vicar-general of the Pope, to confer on Philip all the sacred orders with very brief intervals. During the month of March 1551, Lunelli conferred on him the tonsure, the four minor orders, and the subdiaconate, in the church of S. Thomas in Parione. On Holy Saturday, which fell in that same month of March, he was ordained deacon in the basilica of S. John Lateran; and on the 23d of May he received the priesthood in S. Thomas of Parione. Two months later he completed his thirty-sixth year, so that he became a priest in the full vigour of manhood, in that "midway

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of the journey of our life" when a man begins to be master of himself. The first effervescence of youth has died down, and life is guided by that manly sense which is equally removed from the inexperience of youth and the languor of old age.

We can feebly imagine with what piety, love, and humility Philip received the sacred anointing of the priesthood; it is a mystery too bright to look fixedly upon. It is easier to represent to ourselves Philip already a priest, because the inner beauty of the christian priesthood naturally reflects itself upon the outer man, and because in Philip it was perfect and complete from the first. The first year of his priesthood has this distinctive character, that in it he reaches and exhibits, so far as man can see, the last perfection of the priestly state. He began where others end; and would to God that we his sons might hope to end where he began! I do not mean that his priestly life was not a continuous growth in perfection, but that that growth was hardly to be measured by an ordinary observer, so finished and complete was he as a priest from the very first, so evident is it that the germs of all we shall see hereafter, in a life prolonged to an extreme age, were even then unfolded.

As soon as Philip became a priest he resolved to live with other priests; and therefore he left his room at the Caccias, not without some affectionate regrets, and betook himself to a house which bore the name of S. Girolamo della Carità, where lived some holy priests. And as this house is so closely bound up with the life of our saint, it is befitting that we should know something of its history. In the ward or quarter of the Regola, and near the Campo di Fiore, are a church and house which still bear the name of

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S. Girolamo della Carità. An unbroken and unquestioned tradition affirms that on this site stood the house of S. Paula, a noble matron of the fifth century who, under the direction of S. Jerome, became a great saint. There S. Jerome himself lived for some time, and it would appear that in his honour it was made a collegiate church. Much later on it passed into the hands of the third order of S. Francis, who founded there a hospital in 1419. In 1519 Cardinal Julius dei Medici, then vice-chancellor of Holy Church, gave 2000 golden ducats to found there a Confraternity of Charity; its members were to bury the dead, to distribute large alms to the poor, to provide for the wants of poor prisoners and fallen women and orphans, to retain advocates to defend the cause of the poor, and, in a word, to minister aid of every kind to the suffering and oppressed. This confraternity had been at first erected in S. Andrea in Piscinola, and it was transferred to S. Girolamo in 1523, when Cardinal dei Medici became Pope under the name of Clement VII. The friars gave up both church and house to the confraternity della Carità, but they did not at once leave it; they remained in it, in fact, until the year 1536. In that year the confraternity resolved to retain for the service of the church a few priests or chaplains, generally thirteen in number, and six acolytes. A few rooms resembling the cells of a monastery were set apart for these, and their wants were provided for by the confraternity. The church was then small, but its very atmosphere inspired devotion. It was in form very much like the church of S. Thomas of the English;[1] over the door was a crucifix, with portraits of S. Jerome on one side and S. Francis on the other,

[1] The church of the English College.

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both by Antonio Viviano, an esteemed painter of the day. The little church of S. Girolamo was then rebuilt on a larger scale, as we see it now, in the year 1607; and for it was painted the famous masterpiece of Domenichino, the Communion of S. Jerome, which is now in the Vatican collection.

In 1551 there were living in the house of S. Girolamo some priests of great virtue, such as Persiano Rosa, Philip's confessor; Bonsignore Cacciaguerra[1] of Siena, whom the older biographers justly speak of as a distinguished man; Francesco Marsuppini of Arezzo, a man of great purity of intention and simplicity of life; another Francesco, called the Spaniard, of equal goodness; and Pietro Spadari, also of Arezzo, who died in repute of great sanctity. Philip held all these in great esteem and affection, and three of them, Rosa, Marsuppini, and Spadari, were successively his confessors. But far more than with their persons, Philip was taken with their way of life—a few priests living in community and devoting themselves to the work of the sacred ministry. So that the confraternity of Charity had for Philip an attraction so special and strong that he went without hesitation or delay to live with these priests as the lowest and least amongst them. It was a life worthy of Philip. These servants of God lived together in holy charity; that was their only bond and rule. Particular constitutions they had none, nor was there at first any superior; the deference shown to age was the only approach to a hierarchy. They had not a common table, nor any obligations as a community; they simply strove together to sanctify themselves,

[1] There exists a long Life of Cacciaguerra, and his Spiritual Letters, which were printed in 1564, are of singular beauty, and attest his sanctity.

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and to gather in a harvest of souls. Never was there among them a word of dissension or thought of pre-eminence; each strove to surpass the other in humility and in fervour alone. Thus they lived in great peace, and gave a great example; and indeed, priests who could freely and joyfully live such a life for many years must have been men of great virtue. Any one who knows the heart of man stands amazed at finding so much goodness and such perfect unity, without written laws or any kind of government. And we cannot doubt that this example had great influence on the idea of the Oratory, which Philip was slowly and quite unconsciously maturing.

Philip's costume at Girolamo was that of the other priests. Their hair was long behind, and fell down upon their shoulders; their dress was a *zimarra* or cloak with long sleeves, and on their heads they wore a priest's coif or *beretto*, and over this was a large hat, tied under the chin, just like those which were worn by the auditors of the Rota, when they accompanied the Pope on horseback. At that time this dress inspired respect and devotion, and the lives of these priests were known to be pious and holy; and so the Romans called them *Padri*, as they called the members of the religious orders.[1] Thus the companions of Philip, the habit he wore, the church itself of S. Girolamo della Carità, all inspired him with renewed fervour, and increased the veneration which had been accorded him while still a layman.

Philip's first thought on entering the house of S. Girolamo was to manifest in himself the sacred impress of the priesthood of Jesus, and to imitate, so far as he

[1] See Marangoni: *Vita del servo di Dio P. Buonsignore Cacciaguerra. Roma*, 1712.

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could, His most holy and gracious life. Jesus in His priestly office offered Himself in sacrifice to the Father, forgave the sins of all who drew near to Him with faith and love, and sowed by His preaching the seed of the good tidings of God. And Philip not only resolved to offer the Divine Sacrifice every day, to devote himself to the ministry of the sacrament of penance, and to preach; but he resolved that he would, in these three great functions, always try to reflect the image of Jesus Christ. From the day of his ordination he ever set before his eyes Jesus the great High Priest, and united himself so intimately with Him, that his works were in their substance the works of Christ, wrought by him as an instrument. He looked on himself as the branch abiding in the vine, and the vine was Christ; he strove to be one with Christ, as Christ and the Father are one. Nor is there in this anything to startle us. It is the very idea of the christian priesthood, and he who does not realize it in some degree has the sacerdotal character indeed, but is not a priest after the heart of Jesus Christ.

Philip said mass every morning, and in saying it united himself so intimately to his Lord that this union often became a rapture or an ecstasy. No sooner did he begin to put on the sacred vestments than the beauty, the goodness, the holiness of the Divine Victim he was about to offer presented themselves most vividly to his mind and heart. This inner vision was enough to fill his soul with a glow of holy love. At first he gave free course to this impulse of love, but soon it became so impetuous that he found it necessary to distract his mind from it. And so it came to pass that, whereas a priest strives by every means to collect his wandering mind in God before

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saying mass, Philip was obliged to divert his thoughts from God. Without this he could not command the attention required by the external rite of the holy sacrifice, and instead of saying mass he would have passed whole hours absorbed in God. It is a fact so unusual, so amazing, that it would hardly be credible were it not again and again attested in the process of Philip's canonization, and by witnesses whose testimony no one could hesitate to receive.

Although Philip did everything in his power to hinder, or at least to restrain, this influx of divine love when he was saying mass, he did not always succeed. Even when he did succeed, his fervour manifested itself by visible tokens; it could not be hid, it must break forth outwardly. Philip saying mass was a sight of wonder and of awe. His countenance was unwontedly animated and enkindled, and its expression as of one looking into heaven. In all his movements there was a great modesty, but at the same time a something which riveted the beholder. When he poured the wine into the chalice, his hands trembled so that he was obliged to support his arms upon the altar in order to perform that action. When he took the chalice into his hands, a joy as of paradise filled his heart. During the offertory his whole body trembled visibly, and the movement of his feet could be heard, as if they were gently tapping the *predella* of the altar. When he had consecrated the Sacred Species, and elevated the Body and Blood of the Lord for the adoration of the faithful, he felt himself rapt in God. Sometimes he could hardly lower his hands after the elevation; and when he had raised the Sacred Host, it seemed as if he scarcely touched the earth, and was rising from the ground into the air. When he received the

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Body and the Blood of Jesus Christ, the sweetness of his joy overpowered him, and he involuntarily and unconsciously betrayed it outwardly. He could not take his eager lips from the chalice of the divine blessing, and even left the marks of his teeth upon it. He kept the sacramental Species in his mouth as long as he could; he found in them a sensible and most exquisite sweetness, as of angels' food. And then his soul took its long and glad repose in that rapturous communion with his God. Very often his tears would flow abundantly during the Epistle or the Gospel or the prayers, and at times during all the mass, and his heart would throb unrestrained. In a word, although Philip did all he could to prevent anything out of the common way in saying mass, and even forbade those who were present from kneeling where they could see his face, yet for more than forty years Philip's mass was regarded as a miracle of holy fervour. Merely to hear it was to all a great blessing, to many the means of rare and high graces; even those whose hearts were dead and cold felt themselves shaken and stirred to the depth of their being.

But the great high-priesthood of Christ shone forth in Philip with singular brightness in his ministration of the sacrament of penance also. As soon as he was a priest, he devoted himself with great love to this difficult and patient ministry. Throughout his life it was in this ministry that he most closely reproduced the living image of Jesus Christ, and that he gathered most abundant fruit. We shall have to speak of it in detail presently, because it was through the confessional that our saint gathered around him a school and a family, his chief glory and his crown. Let us now say a few words on it in passing.

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In hearing confessions Philip had always before his eyes the gentleness, the love, the tender mercy with which Jesus pardoned the woman of Samaria, the Magdalen, the woman taken in adultery, and the penitent thief. When he saw a sinner at his feet, he recalled to his mind the Good Shepherd of the Gospel who goes in anxious search of the sheep that has strayed, the gracious parable of the prodigal son, and the tender and patient charity of the Samaritan to the man lying wounded by the wayside near Jericho. Above all, those most merciful words of Jesus crucified were always sounding in his ears: *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.* Hence, for more than forty years Philip was a confessor who was all charity and sweetness, and his sweetness and charity had a power which amazed all. In administering the sacrament of penance, he knew well how to act as judge and teacher and physician of souls; but his great delight was to feel himself, and to be felt by others, especially a Father. Hence it became so easy to him to move to compunction those who came to him, to inflame their hearts, to transfuse into so many his own spirit. With women, especially at first, he was somewhat severe and very sparing of words; but neither his severity nor his parsimony of words could conceal his natural and (I had almost said) involuntary sweetness. Only to see Philip in the confessional, or to go near him, diffused through the heart a mysterious and ineffable consolation. As a confessor, Philip was irresistible. The serene and tranquil expression of his look, the beaming tenderness of his eyes, the gentle smile which dwelt upon his lips, his soothing loving words, even the tremulous agitation of his heart, all combined to dispose his penitents to compunction and devotion, and a true

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sorrow for their sins. Nor was this all. If the penitents were men, and especially if they were young men, he would lay his hand affectionately on their heads, or draw them to his heart, or caress them gently, or his eyes would fill with tears on their account; in these and other ways he drew their hearts to himself, that he might unite them to God. And thus we are able to understand why a few words spoken by Philip were often enough to convert persons in whom habits of sin were most rooted and inveterate. There was another circumstance which gave Philip the feeling of a father towards his penitents. One of his most distinctive characteristics, of which we shall have occasion to speak more fully hereafter, was a bright cheerfulness of spirit, which went with him throughout his life, and which helped him much in his ministry to souls. This genial cheerfulness and sympathy drew sinners to Philip with singular force; it made them love him, and to love Philip was to be drawn mightily towards God.

Hence Philip applied himself to this ministry with marvellous assiduity and constancy. Not satisfied with hearing confessions during the day, he continued them on into the night; and in the morning before dawn he had generally confessed forty persons in his own room. For the convenience of these, he used to leave his key under the door that they might come in whenever they pleased. He allowed nothing to interfere with this great work of reconciling sinners to God. He would interrupt even his prayers, or leave his dinner, the moment he was asked for in the confessional. He used to go into S. Girolamo at daybreak, and remain there administering the sacrament of penance until close upon midday, when he usually said

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his mass. If it happened that no penitents came, he remained in his confessional praying, or saying Office or the Rosary, or reading some spiritual book. This ministry of pardon, and of the mercy of our Father in heaven, was peculiarly dear to Philip, so that he used to say: "It is the greatest delight to me even to sit in the confessional. What do you mean by calling it a fatigue? It is not a fatigue, but a solace and refreshment. Do not shrink, then, from coming to me; you can never be too many."

We shall see in the course of our narrative the wonderful effects of this unwearying assiduity. Suffice it to say now that, from the first year of his life as a priest, Philip's penitents were very many, and of every rank in life; and that the confessional was one of the most efficacious means employed by him for the reform both of morals and of discipline in Rome. The thought of a holy reformation, which before his priesthood was vague and general, now gained strength day by day and took a definite direction. He little thought when first he began to hear confessions in S. Girolamo what multitudes of Romans would flock to him during the forty-five years of his apostolate. Still less did he think that he was little by little restoring the neglected and almost forgotten practice of frequent confession and communion. But the loving, far-seeing providence of God guided Philip in all his ways, so that he wrought incalculable good in the simplest way, and, as it were, quite unintentionally. How unsearchable are the counsels of God! the haughty boasting of the protestant reform was confronted and laid low by a virtue and a holiness and a reformation unconscious of their own existence.

But let us advance a step farther in our study of

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this first year of Philip's priesthood. Let us recall the memory of Jesus Christ, the Teacher of eternal life to the chosen people, and then let us turn to Philip, the teacher of eternal life to the people of Rome in a dark and troubled time. Philip's words were not only all of Christ, and reflected Christ, but they remind us, expressively and at once, of the gracious words that were spoken in the Holy Land. What our divine Lord did in Judea by His personal ministry, that He did in Rome by means of Philip in the sixteenth century. The work was His alone, and therefore its results were great beyond all hope. This disproportion between the simple, candid, unadorned preaching of our saint and the effect it produced, compel us to trace in that preaching the creative power of the eternal Word of God.

We have spoken of S. Philip's preaching while he was yet a layman; his manner and style were now but slightly changed. He did not usually preach in the church of S. Girolamo. His soul glowed with a boundless charity, but he did not utter that charity from the pulpit, nor smite and wound with the sword of the spoken word; he subdued souls and led them captive with the eloquence of his heart. He began to gather a few persons, some eight or ten at first, into his room after the midday dinner. There he would stand, leaning upon the post of his bed, and sometimes sitting on it when tired; and in this simple way he would engage them in familiar conversation about the kingdom of heaven. He was like a father with his children around him. Just as Jesus, passing by the lake side of Gennesareth, or along the ways of Judea, or in the synagogue, asked questions of His disciples or of the multitude, and listened lovingly to their answers, and cleared away their doubts; just so did Philip in his little room

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at S. Girolamo. The attention of all was kept awake, for each felt the charm there is in genial conversation, and by degrees all were bound together into one with that bond of friendship and of charity which is the most precious treasure of the great christian family.[1]

Sometimes he directed those who were present to discourse freely among themselves on some subject more or less directly connected with the soul and with God; and when he saw that their minds were prepared, he would speak in his turn from a heart overflowing with charity, and with a most winning simplicity and gentleness. He took especial delight, says Gallonio, in speaking on detachment from the world, the beauty of virtue, and the reward of the just. And he spoke of these with such fervour that his simple, unadorned words were clothed with an eloquence and a beauty which fascinated his hearers. He wished that his spiritual children should preach as he did; and this simple and familiar way of announcing the word of God was admirably adapted to the times in which he lived. It was Philip's aim to stem the torrent of pride and vanity, clothing themselves in exaggerated figures of speech and far-fetched conceits, which was the peril of the preaching of his day.

Let us now return to Philip discoursing in his room at S. Girolamo della Carità. To understand the effect of his simple eloquence, we must remember his countenance, bright and almost flaming with emotion, and the trembling and beating of his heart, which often shook the bed on which he was sitting and the whole room, and produced in his hearers a feeling of awe, together

[1] I have taken this description from an unpublished Life of the saint in the library of the Vallicella; it was written by one of Philip's disciples, and revised by Cardinal Baronio.

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with holy thoughts and desires of perfection. Often the involuntary movements of his heart suspended his power to speak; but then his look, his eyes, his tears, his agitation itself, spoke more eloquently still to the heart and will of those who saw him. I might almost call these the supernatural forces of Philip's preaching, but his charity found many resources in the natural order. He divested his preaching of all that was abstruse, of all pomp of words, and of that rigid conventional form which so often destroys the effect of the word of God. He never separated it from his many other artifices of charity; all seemed to lead up naturally to this. If any one came for the first time to these meetings, he began by welcoming him with cheerful cordiality; almost always he embraced him affectionately, and entered into conversation with him. If he was a physician, he would speak of medicine; if a philosopher, of philosophy; if a poet, of poetry. He laid himself out to gain their hearts, and make them wish to come again. And then by degrees the conversation would turn, as if naturally, on spiritual things. The writer of the manuscript life of S. Philip adds that his manner was so easy, genial, and unconstrained, that men of the world did not shun him as they are wont to shun those who are harsh and severe; and that Philip was looked upon, especially in the earlier years of his priesthood, rather as a man of extraordinary kindness of heart than as a saint.

We shall see presently what were the fruits of this gentle, simple way of preaching; we will now confine ourselves to the life of our saint during this first year of his priesthood. We cannot enter without profound reverence the house of S. Girolamo della Carità, which S. Philip lived in for more than thirty years and then left

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with regret; the house he loved so much because in it he had passed the best and most active years of his life. It is now more than three hundred years since he took up his abode there, and hallowed it by his presence. The building is, unhappily, much changed from what it was in his time; but there are still some traces of its former state which make it precious in our eyes, and help us to picture to ourselves the figure of our beloved saint, especially in the act of preaching. At the foot of the staircase is the door he opened and closed again so often, now splintered and worn away because the faithful have long been wont to break off some particle of it when they can, and treasure it as a relic. The rooms he occupied are still shown, but they are very much altered and modernized. In the one above Philip slept; and as that was at first the only room allotted to him, it was in that room that he used to gather his first penitents, and discourse to them in the way and with the results we have seen. It is an irreparable loss that little or nothing of the old room has been left; but his bed is still preserved as it was in the sixteenth century, with its canopy of small planks arranged crosswise, in the fashion of the time. It is a poor little room, very low; and if it then had no other window than the one which now looks into the corridor, it must have been more like the cell of a prison, but there was probably some other since walled up. The lower room, which he enlarged as the number of his disciples increased, is now arranged as a chapel, and around it are simple inscriptions recording various facts in the life of the saint. In these rooms then, or rather in the upper room of the two, Philip began his work as a priest, calling around him not more than seven or eight persons. His biographers have preserved the names of some of

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these, and, as the firstfruits of Philip's apostolate, they are worthy to be had in remembrance. There was Simone Grazzini, a Florentine; Monte Zazzara, also of Florence; Michele da Prato, two young goldsmiths, and one of the family of the Massimi. This was the little audience to which Philip began to preach the kingdom of God, the beginning of a work the end of which was the transformation of Rome. Their numbers soon increased, and Philip was obliged to take another room. This, too, was soon found too small, and we see to this day in S. Girolamo an oratory which we know the saint built himself to receive the gathering crowd of his disciples.

As little streamlets flowing down a mountain side widen as they flow, and end in forming a broad river, so was it with these various works of the first year of Philip's priesthood. Taken apart, they were small and lowly, but of incomparable value, because they were inspired and vivified by an immense charity. And thus they expanded rapidly, and held within them a great and unsuspected power of expansion. God was leading our saint step by step in the way, and guiding him to sow thus unwittingly the first germs of his Congregation of the Oratory. Those humble priests living together and saying mass daily; those seculars associated with them for worship and for charity; that simple unpretending way of preaching; that gathering of his penitents around him as a family of sons; all these were as glimmerings of light foretokening his great idea of reviving, for some of the clergy at least, the ancient use of community life, together with the ancient simplicity and fervour.

While Philip was thus realizing in his life the sacred priesthood of Christ, he did not forget the works of his earlier days, but interwove them beautifully with

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his works as a priest. He never abandoned his much-loved catacomb, though he could not now go there so often; he visited, when he could, the seven churches; and, above all, he tended the sick and the poor with the same assiduity, consoling them and relieving their wants. The care of the sick and the poor, indeed, seemed to him a pre-eminently priestly work, and all his life long he never relinquished or neglected it. In his old age we shall find him most commonly among these; and it was remarked that he was never so gentle, so caressing, so cheerful as when he was with them. As I am speaking now of the first year of Philip's priesthood, I will mention one fact alone which exemplifies his great charity at that time.

While Philip lived at S. Girolamo, he would never accept any salary or allowance for his services in the church, although, as we have said, the other priests received from the confraternity of Charity a small but sufficient stipend. Now in that year, 1551, there was a great famine and dearth of provisions in Rome, and Philip suffered greatly from it, not in his own person only, but for others. One day a charitable person who had remarked the excessive poverty of the saint, secretly sent him six loaves of bread. But Philip knew that one of the priests of S. Girolamo was that very day altogether destitute of food, and therefore ran without delay to his room, and gave him all the loaves, without reserving even a crust for himself. He said nothing of his own want of food, and his bright cheerful manner made the priest conclude that he was well supplied, and he accepted the loaves with great gratitude. That day Philip's food consisted of thirty olives; and when he was asked by a penitent of his, named Prospero, why he had done this, since the loaves were enough

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for two persons, he answered with great simplicity: "Because that priest was a stranger in Rome, and far from his own people; he would not have so readily found any one to give him bread as I should."

Such, then, was the first year of Philip's priesthood, and such was his life to the end, for more than forty-five years. This first year was as the outline of a painting which time and toil fill up and clothe with perfection. But while we are watching the successive touches which bring out all the grandeur of the design, let us not forget the beauty of that first sketch. It is a beauty which overpowers me; and, perhaps because it is smaller, and the figures fewer and nearer one another, it is more readily taken in by the eye, and more vividly impresses the imagination. If I knew nothing more of Philip's life than this, this would suffice not only to make me love him, but to see in him a type of priestly life in its highest perfection. What higher, holier ambition can urge the heart of a priest than this: to say mass as Philip said it, to hear confessions as he heard them, to preach as he preached, to live with our brethren as he lived with his, to be unwearied in charity as he was?

Before concluding this chapter, I must not omit to speak of two young laymen, who had been for some time Philip's disciples, and who were led by their own great fervour of spirit and their affection for him to follow him to S. Girolamo. The first was Enrico Pietra, whose name has been mentioned before. He was a bright and engaging youth, of a noble family in Piacenza; and he had been sent to Rome to enrich himself by commerce, and was employed, as we have said, in the warehouse of Alessio Bettini. He was at once so captivated by Philip's sweetness and attractiveness

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that he followed his example, gave up all thought of commerce and wealth, and devoted himself to God alone. From that moment he never left Philip's side. He followed him, of course, to S. Girolamo, where Buonsignore Cacciaguerra, his confessor, lived, and there, by Philip's direction, he became a priest.

In this new state of life Philip was to him the ideal of all excellence, and he strove to imitate him in all respects. He thought that what Philip was doing, by means of the Oratory and of his preaching, might be very usefully done in another sphere; and he devoted himself with great zeal to teaching the catechism, that treasury of christian wisdom. He gave to the tender minds and hearts of children the very same instruction which Philip gave to his disciples in his little room at S. Girolamo, and in the same spirit. He felt that this instruction would be an invaluable treasure to the poor, who were too often neglected in their ignorance. Philip heartily approved the idea of his disciple and friend, and aided him in every way. Enrico began, by Philip's advice, very modestly and humbly; and soon infused a new life into the Congregation of Christian Doctrine which had long existed in Rome, though not as a community. Cardinal Savelli, at that time vicar of the Pope, then appointed him superior of that Congregation, and gave him the superintendence of all the Roman catechetical schools, with power to select such persons as he deemed fitted to be employed in them. The Institute grew and flourished under his direction, and erelong a small community was established close to the church of S. Dorothea in the Trastevere. But though Pietra loved this great work and devoted himself to it with great zeal, he could not separate himself from Philip, and continued for thirty

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years to live with him at S. Girolamo. He passed the greater part of the day in his house in the Trastevere, and Philip often went with him to encourage by his presence the new community of priests, and the great work of teaching the catechism. Our saint had a room set apart for his use by the community, in which he sometimes slept. At times he took with him some of his companions; and we know that both Baronio and Tarugi were frequent visitors to the schools in the Trastevere. In course of time Pietra's institute spread far and wide beyond the city of Rome, and in addition to a thorough knowledge of the catechism, and the most careful training of the heart, it gave the children of the poor the elements, at least, of secular education. Philip took great delight in the growth and success of the work of his beloved disciple, and to the end of his life aided greatly by counsel and example the diffusion of religious instruction both in Rome and throughout the Church.[1]

The other youth who followed Philip to S. Girolamo was Teseo Raspa, who likewise became a priest under Philip's direction, lived a pious and edifying life, and was very closely associated with Enrico Pietra in the work of the Christian doctrine. His was a character of great beauty; somewhat harsh and stern at first, but in the end, and after heroic efforts, assimilated by Philip's sweet and gentle charity. Unlike as they were in natural disposition, Philip loved him tenderly from the first, kept him always at his side, and assisted him with great affection at his death.[2]

[1] Besides the biographers of the saint, see Giovan Pietro de Crescenzi Romani, *Corona delle nobiltà d' Italia*, Narrazione xxiii. 4; Marangoni, *Vita di Buonsignore Cacciaguerra;* and Castiglione, *Storia della Scuola della Dottrina Christiana*.

[2] See Marangoni, as above.

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CHAPTER II.

TRIBULATIONS AND TEMPTATIONS.

THE first year of Philip's priesthood passed away in deep and unruffled peace. He not only had the perfect peace which keeps the soul of him who loves God, and finds his blessedness in loving Him, but he met with no outward obstacles in the way of life he had traced out for himself. The priests with whom he lived at S. Girolamo loved him, and he loved them in return; his penitents and disciples were affectionately devoted to him, and grateful for the blessings they received through him; the simple, frugal, even straitened life he led did not affect his peace, except to increase it by giving him occasion to practise that virtue of self-sacrifice always so dear to the saints. An unrelaxing fervour in prayer, and a great sensible devotion, diffused a sacred calm over his whole life. But as at times, when we are looking out upon the sea as it lies before us calm and at rest, its repose is suddenly broken by ripples which fret and crisp its surface, and then by waves with lines of foam, which gather strength and break in fury on the shore, so was it soon and unexpectedly with Philip. It was the will of God that he should be tested and proved by tribulations, and these in a wonderful way furthered the designs of Providence in his regard. They tempered anew and infused fresh vigour into a soul already by long habit

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rooted and firm in virtue, but before whom lay still a far higher reach of perfection.

The christian virtues are all grafted upon one common stock, and receive their sap and increase from Christ alone; and thus they are near akin, they partake largely one of another, or rather each implicitly contains the others. But in regard of their manifestation in act, we are struck more sensibly now with one, and now with another; the beauty of each is but a reflexion of the beauty of the others, and when combined they give back the full image of Jesus *beautiful above the sons of men.*

We know that as Philip was from his boyhood full of charity and tenderness, and of the spirit of holy poverty and obedience, so was he naturally patient. That virtue had not been much displayed, because it was interior, and had as yet but few occasions to show itself outwardly. And now the Lord revealed it, proved it, cherished and increased it, by means of a tribulation which would seem to the world an intolerable grievance. But the wisdom of human passions and that of our Lord are always in contradiction, and are related to each other as the shadow to the light. The world sees happiness only in smiles and in pleasure; but Jesus, because He loves us even in the misery which sin has brought on us, reveals to us an unsuspected treasure of holy joy, of beauty and of grandeur, not indeed in tears and sorrows of themselves, but in the voluntary acceptance of them for the love of God.

Besides the priests who lived together at S. Girolamo there were, as has been said, a few others, either seculars belonging to the Confraternity of Charity and intrusted with its administration, or clerics employed in

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the service of the Church. The seculars were indeed the owners and masters of the place, and were therefore persons of great importance in it. Now amongst these there were three, one secular and two clerics, in whom the life and work of Philip excited envy and irritation. The secular was Vincenzo Teccosi of Fabriano, a physician, and one of the deputies of the confraternity; the clerics were really priests, and their names are not given. We know only that, though they were employed as sacristans, they were religious who had run away from their convent, and are therefore called *apostates* by the saint's biographers. We cannot conjecture what the particular reasons were which rendered Philip hateful to them. Knowing him as we do, we cannot find either motive or pretext for their conduct. But the heart of man is a dark, sad mystery; and often the virtue which draws and wins so many is to others a ground of aversion. So we see that same sun which, with its light and genial warmth, gives life and beauty to flowers which have within them the capacity of exuberant life, withers and hastens the decay of those which are languid and sickly. And the reason of this is, that virtue has two aspects—with one it consoles, with the other it rebukes; it is fair and beautiful to the understanding, foul and hateful to the senses; it has words of sacred peace for the just, and words of condemnation for the unjust. Hence it is dear to the good, and odious to the bad. So weak and inconsistent is the heart of man, that sometimes the good fail to recognize the virtues of others; and, on the other hand, the evil tolerate them from a secret and reluctant love, and hold them at least in reverence.

From whatever motive, the virtue of Philip was to this physician and the two clerics as a thorn that pierced

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their hearts and irritated them, perverted their nature, and made them beside themselves with contempt and anger. At first, they spoke of Philip and his doings in terms of disparagement, and at length said all manner of evil of him openly and in public. Philip knew it, and said nothing; but this humble silence irritated them yet more, and they displayed their contempt for the saint in every possible way, laughing him to scorn and turning him into ridicule as a doting simpleton. And two of these were religious, who had not been trained for this in the cloister; it is another illustration of the axiom: *corruptio optimi pessima*, the foulest corruption is that of things in themselves the best.

Of all the wrongs that can be done to a man, contempt and scorn are perhaps the most keenly felt, and wound the deepest. And this wrong was the weapon employed against Philip by his three enemies, with ingenious and unrelenting malice. They did not consider that, simply as a man, Philip was worthy of all honour and respect, for his genius, his culture, and the singular dignity of his personal presence. Nor did it occur to them that a man with mind so bright and keen might pay back scorn for scorn, and insult for insult. Nothing could restrain them; and they treated Philip with every cowardly insult which could test his patience and his virtue. Sometimes when he went into the church they would hastily shut the door in his face; they abused and ridiculed him, they would not give him vestments for his mass, or gave him those that were worn out and torn. They would hide the chalice or the missal, or take them rudely from him; and often when he was vested for mass they would make him unvest and wait. When he had reached the altar at which he was going to say mass, they would hurry

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him off to another, or make him go back into the sacristy. In short, they persistently and in every way ridiculed him, annoyed him, and persecuted him. The more patient, humble, and submissive he showed himself, the more their rage increased, and their words of insult; so that they left nothing untried to weary out his patience and provoke him to anger. Few can even understand what pleasure these wretched men could find in treating a brother priest with such persistent contumely and cruelty; few can know of what the heart of man is capable when corrupted and brutalized by hatred and envy. When these men saw that nothing they could do ruffled the patience or the peace of the saint, they devised other means for making him leave S. Girolamo; but in these, too, they utterly failed.

Philip's heart was kind and gentle, but it was also sensitive and quick, so that he suffered greatly from this persecution; the rather that for two whole years his enemies continued to wreak their malice on him. One thing sustained him all along, his firm resolve to suffer for the love of God. The more his enemies did to shake or disquiet him, the firmer he stood, like a rock at whose base the waves are breaking in idle rage. Not only so—he treated his persecutors with unwearying courtesy and holy charity, and rendered them many services, without regard to their treatment of him. Several persons advised him to leave that church, for a time at least; but he resolved to stay, deeming that God had not sent him there to run away from his cross, but to practise patience. And in order to offer himself to God as a more entire sacrifice, and to show what was the might of the love of God in his heart, he resolved further that he would not allow himself to feel any resentment, or utter any complaint, or make his

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anguish known to any but to God alone. To God he turned with sighs and tears, entreating Him, not to take away his cross, but to strengthen him to bear it meekly and patiently, in union with Christ. And we may imagine what vigour was infused into the virtue of the saint under the pressure of this tribulation, and how clear a light of wisdom shone upon his mind after this experience of the *foolishness of the cross*. The three miserable persecutors had hoped to dishonour and degrade him with their words of scorn; and God gave him instead the grandeur and the merit of a complete victory over himself, a victory which confers on him who wins it a true and imperishable greatness.

One day his anguish was so unusually keen, and the struggle so hard between nature which shrinks from suffering, and the will which, sustained by grace, accepts it meekly, that it seemed to him that his patience was exhausted. But it was not so. He had always shown himself most patient towards his persecutors, and now in faith and love he expressed his impatience to God alone. During the mass he fixed his eyes upon the crucifix, and prayed: "O good Jesus, why is it that Thou dost not hear me? See how long a time I have besought Thee to give me patience! Why is it that Thou hast not heard me, and why is my soul disquieted with thoughts of anger and impatience?" It seems at first as if he were complaining of God, and imploring an end to his tribulation; but in truth his words reveal to us only the exceeding bitterness of his suffering, and the repugnance of our nature of itself to suffer. They are words which are both illustrated and justified by the prayer of Jesus on the cross: *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?* And thereupon God caused him to hear in the depth of his soul a

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voice at once of comfort and of teaching, the voice we all may hear in time of suffering: "Dost thou not ask of Me patience, Philip? Behold, I will give it to thee speedily, on this condition, that if thou in thy heart desire it, thou earn it through these temptations of thine." His fervent prayer, and the answering voice he heard down in his inmost soul, and an ineffable sweetness which filled his heart with gladness, so consoled and strengthened him, that he needed nothing else to bear that persecution patiently and to the end. Henceforward, by the abounding grace of God, he knew and felt how a man may be glad and rejoice in suffering for the sake of Christ. It is not that suffering in itself alone can ever give us gladness; but a Christian's gladness in suffering arises from a movement of love to God, at times so swift and joyous that it in great measure overcomes and suppresses the opposing sense of pain.

Things went on thus, as I have said, for two years; but very soon after this prayer an event occurred which put an end to the persecution. On one of the two apostates Philip's patience had at length its effect; he began to feel a movement of remorse, and either ceased entirely from persecuting the saint, or his insults became less gross and frequent. He had no thought, however, of changing his life. The other, on the contrary, from the greater pride and ferocity of his nature, grew worse, and ran headlong down the way of perdition. One day he met the saint somewhere near the sacristy, and at once, without any reason, assailed him with words of reviling. Meanwhile the other apostate came up, and seeing Philip so patient while thus overwhelmed with unmerited insult, his heart melted with compassion towards him, and at the same time he felt his blood boil within him

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with indignation, so that he rushed on the other, and would have strangled him on the spot. But Philip came to his rescue and saved him from death, and made him promise to leave him from that time forth in peace. The first apostate was thus led to enter into himself. Aided by the prayers and the counsels of the saint, he began to weep bitterly for his fall, and resolved to return to the order which he had deserted. He did as he had resolved, and learned what a grace it is, even for an apostate, to be brought in contact with a saint. Very shortly afterwards the heart of the physician Teccosi was overcome and entirely changed by Philip's superhuman virtue. He had been the first to let loose this storm on Philip, and had long cherished towards him feelings of envy and hatred; but in the end he cast himself at Philip's feet in presence of many persons, and humbly asked his forgiveness. Philip raised him from the ground, looked at him with those eyes of his which said so much, and embraced him tenderly as his son. And thenceforward Teccosi became, to the wonder of all, one of the saint's most devoted spiritual children, following him everywhere, and never letting a day pass without going to see him. And, in addition to all this, about that time that great servant of God, Buonsignore Cacciaguerra, was chosen superior of the church and house of S. Girolamo, and brought into fuller light the holiness of his beloved father Philip.[1]

Throughout his life Philip had no lack of opponents and enemies, but the beautiful meekness and patience he had shown during these two years never forsook him. And here I may mention another instance, belonging indeed to a period some years later, but

[1] Marangoni: *Vita di Buonsignore Cacciaguerra.*

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exemplifying the same virtue. There was at that time in Rome a certain Altilio Serrano, an Olivetan monk, who had left his order by stealth, and had somehow become a prelate. To this man Philip's holy and exemplary life was a keen and constant reproach. He began to hate him; then he went on to persecute him, giving him out as a hypocrite and impostor; and lost no occasion of disparaging and calumniating the saint to the Cardinal chancellor, whom he happened to know. When Philip heard of this he not only felt no resentment, but recommended his calumniator to the Cardinal, and obtained for him an increase of income. It might have been hoped that this great charity would soften his heart, but the poor apostate was only irritated by it to revile Philip more and more. At length the wretched man was taken suddenly ill, and Philip went at once to console him with great affection. In a few days Altilio died quite unexpectedly, and when the saint heard of his death he lamented him as though he had been a dear friend. The suddenness of his end made Philip anxious about the salvation of his soul, and caused him a bitter sadness of heart. He prayed for him fervently, and then asking for a Bible opened it at the words: *A man that is an apostate, an unprofitable man, walketh with a perverse mouth. With a wicked heart he deviseth evil, and at all times he soweth discord. His destruction shall presently come, and he shall suddenly be destroyed, and shall no longer have any remedy.*[1]

[1] Proverbs vi. 12. This fact is related in great detail in the manuscript life to which I have already referred. That life speaks also of a well-known ecclesiastic in high station who publicly outraged and insulted Philip in the church, because he did not wear a cotta in the confessional. The saint betrayed no sign of resentment, but answered with a gentleness and courtesy almost incredible.

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After the two years of sorrow and trial of which we have spoken, God granted Philip a time of rest, although in the beginning of his priesthood he was more or less proved with almost continuous tribulation. Gallonio relates that often, when he was praying, his imagination was disquieted by diabolical apparitions which chilled his heart with terror, and that he drove them away by invoking our blessed Lady. One day, for instance, while passing by the baths of Diocletian, he saw on a fragment of the ruins a strange and hideous figure as of a man, who at one moment looked old and then again young; and he felt at once that this was a device of the devil to terrify him. Then he commanded the loathsome apparition to declare who it was, and it immediately disappeared, leaving a disgusting smell behind it. And to these trials was added a serious fever which was brought on by excessive fatigue in one of his visits to the seven churches. We are not told how long this fever lasted, nor whether his life was in danger; it would seem that he was for some time very ill, and that he recovered almost suddenly.

And now it pleased God to try Philip's virtue in other ways. We have already spoken of his singular purity, and of the trials to which it was exposed. From that time the growing love of God had so filled his heart with heavenly affections, that his mind, his imagination, his very body bore the impress of a virginal purity; and this was deepened after he became a priest. But just as in the beginning of his apostolate as a layman his chastity was put to the proof, so did it come to pass soon after his entrance upon his apostolate as a priest. But as a lily, which rain and hail and wind strive to cast to the ground and defile, stands only the more firmly in its unspotted strength, so was it with Philip. There

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lived at that time in the Via Giulia a woman named Cesarea, of great beauty, but of abandoned character. Her pride had so far blinded her that she coveted the glory of having overcome a man held in repute of sanctity, by leading him into sin. She had heard of Philip's angelical purity and blameless deportment, and she boasted to a young man of her acquaintance that she was quite sure she could very easily overcome him, and that she would try. So she pretended to be ill, and sent to Philip to say that, feeling herself in danger of death, she wished to change her life and make her confession to him. Philip hesitated a while, but his longing desire to help a soul stained with such miserable sin urged him so strongly that he went to see her, thinking as he went of the Good Shepherd who went after the sheep that had strayed, and brought it back with joy to the fold. But on reaching the house the wretched woman ran to meet him with no other covering than a thin veil, and with an air so wicked and unabashed that the saint saw at once that she had only spread a snare for him. He did not rebuke her, nor argue with her, nor in any way express his just indignation, nor even raise his eyes towards her, but in an instant turned and fled. The irritated woman felt at once what virtue and what courage there were in that flight; she was stung with a sense of her defeat, and in her rage she threw down the stairs upon the saint a stool, the first thing which came to her hand. But Philip went on his way, neither heeding the outrage nor in any way harmed by it.

Perhaps some of my readers may feel surprise that a saint of virtue so solid and secure as was Philip should find no better way of overcoming a weak and vile woman than flight. But they can hardly have grasped and

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pondered the nature of the enemy of this most precious virtue of the saint. When this enemy assails us it finds within us, corrupted as we are by original sin, accomplices and allies, who, even in the just man, slumber, but are not quelled and slain; its onset awakens them, rouses them, sets them in array against us, gives it hope of victory. He, on the other hand, who shuns this enemy, remains absolute master of himself, and by the aid of divine grace overcomes. Thus in these cases flight is the boldest courage, a courage which shows both will and strength to resist; whereas to stand in presence of the enemy is either cowardice, because it betrays a secret inclination to make terms with him, or it is a temerity, the precursor of almost certain defeat.

This victory was memorable in the life of our saint; it was a great step onwards in the way of God. His biographers relate many rare and high gifts which from this time were bestowed on Philip as the tokens and the rewards of his virginal purity of mind and heart. Gallonio says, for example: "In all my intercourse with the holy father I have always thought that his purity was not inferior to that which, by special favour of God, was given to Eleazar, Count of Ariano, and Simon Salo, so praised in Surius, both of whom lived in the world, and amidst the throng of men, a life more angelical than human." And, in truth, from that day forward the purity of our saint had in it something angelical; so consistent are his biographers, his friends and his confessors, in affirming that the law of the mind and heart had such perfect possession and control of his body, that it followed them in the way of God without effort or struggle. As angels are not weighed down by bodies when they wing their flight with mind and will

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towards the Most High, so to some of His saints God has granted this grace, that the body of corruption should place no abiding obstacle in their upward way. But the saints have never reached this consummation of virtue without prolonged conflicts and hard-earned victories; and, even in regard of them, it may be more correct to say that the hindrances thrown in their way by the corrupt body were indefinitely less than in the other sons of Adam, than that they were altogether removed.

Among the effects produced on Philip by his great purity, there are some which were apparent to all, and which we mention particularly, because they explain better than anything else his irresistible attractiveness, and the wonderful results he achieved with means naturally so inadequate. Some of these I have mentioned in the former book. Here I will add the words of Bacci: "The fruits of this eminent gift were as singular as the gift itself. His virginal innocence shone forth even upon his countenance, and particularly in his eyes, which, even in the last years of his life, were so clear and bright that no painter was ever able to give the expression of them, though many took the greatest pains to do so. It was not easy to keep one's gaze fixed upon his face for any length of time, for there came a sort of light from his eyes which shot into the eyes of those who looked at him and dazzled them; so that some have said that his look was that of an angel of paradise. His hands were white and transparent; and when the sun shone upon them they looked like alabaster." Moreover, all around Philip there breathed a grateful, balmy fragrance, which recalls the words of Isaac to his son Jacob: *Behold, the smell of my son is as the smell of a plentiful field, which the Lord hath*

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blessed. And thus it is not surprising that, by reason of the close relations between body and soul, the purity of others should affect him as a sweet fragrance, and that impurity should reveal itself to him by its loathsome and intolerable stench. And thus God enabled him marvellously to say to one: "You refresh me with the perfume of virtue;" and to another: "You give out to me the ill odour of sin." By these singular gifts God enables some of His elect creatures to catch the harmonies of the body with the soul, and to behold the reflexion of the spiritual in the material and bodily.

Thus, then, Philip was, in the earliest years of his priestly life, marvellously exercised by God in patience, tested and confirmed in chastity, and led on in the way of perfection; and the sphere of his apostolate widened day by day, and almost hour by hour. It will be our pleasant duty to go with our beloved saint in the way he went; but here I must pause to consider an event of this period of his life which is at once glorious as a miracle and exquisitely beautiful as a virtue, an event which even now speaks to all priests, for instruction and in warning.

We have already seen that while Philip was still living in the world he contracted an intimate and holy friendship with Prospero Crivelli, of Milan, and that by his prayers he obtained for him the grace of a true conversion. From that moment Crivelli never forgot Philip, and his friendship for our saint had in it a boundless reverence and devotion. Now in 1554 Crivelli was seized with a serious illness, and as he held some office in the household of Cardinal Antonio Maria Salviati, he was most carefully tended by three physicians, Alessandro di Civita, Francesco of Lucca, and

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Giovanni of Monaco. Notwithstanding their skill and care he grew worse day by day, and was at last given up by the physicians, and received Holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction. Philip was not there; he had been wont to come every day to soothe and comfort his friend, but now, to the astonishment of every one, two days had passed without his coming. The priest was sprinkling the dying man with holy water, and proceeding to commend his soul to God and the saints, when suddenly the saint was at his side. Crivelli roused himself to say, in a tone of loving reproach, "What can be the reason that I have not seen you for two long days? The physicians have told me that I must die if the fever returned to-day, and I feel that it is even now returning. How could you forsake me so?" Philip answered, "May not what I hear be true, that you have by your will made me heir to all your possessions? And what more distressing tidings could come to my ears? I your heir! Be very sure of this, that as to your legacy, I do not want it, and will not have it; leave it to some one else. And to show you that I do not want anything of your inheritance, I am now going off to S. Peter's to pray the Divine Goodness to rescue you from this peril of death. If I cannot otherwise obtain it from God, I will offer Him my life for your life, and for the speedy healing of your sickness. But I hope that I shall readily receive from Him the grace I ask." When he had said these words he burst into tears, and laid his hand on the head of his dying friend, who fell at once into a tranquil sleep. Philip then went to S. Peter's, and prayed for half an hour with exceeding fervour. And while he was praying the dying man awoke, and, to the amazement of all present, arose in perfect health. This fact was affirmed

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on oath by Francesco Maria Cardinal Tarugi, and many others.

This is a grand and instructive miracle, not only because Philip offers to God his life for the life of one dear to him, nor because he gives back life and health and strength to his dying friend; but because he does this that he may himself remain poor, and bequeath to us a most profound and precious lesson. It does not surprise us that the saints should love with a passionate love that poverty which the world holds so contemptible—we see this again and again; but what we do not see is a saint working a miracle that he might still be poor. No doubt in making Philip his heir Crivelli had no thought of Philip himself, for he knew his ardent love of poverty; but he had in view the poor, the sick, the distressed, whom the saint would be enabled to assist; he knew well what good his money would do to souls in Philip's hands. And yet in refusing it Philip speaks sternly, and reproaches his friend as with a wrong, and does violence to God to obtain the recovery of the dying man. He wished to show to all that though he gave largely, he gave not of his superfluity, for he had none, but of what was necessary to himself; yet he would accept no legacy even from his dearest friend. We might almost deem Philip's conduct tinged with some little shade of exaggeration, if we did not ponder all the lesson it was meant to teach, and the immense power it gave him in carrying out his great designs in Rome. In the saint's time many of the clergy were rich, and some abused their riches. The ruling principle of Philip's conduct was this—that to aid in effecting the needful reform in the lives of the clergy in Rome, he must not only be himself absolutely poor, but must hold in horror that wealth which in itself

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indeed is a gift of God, and must give the loudest and fullest expression to his magnanimous contempt of it. The example of a priest living in utter poverty, who, after refusing his uncle's inheritance and the stipend of a priest at S. Girolamo, wrought a miracle to avoid being the heir of his friend, was far more powerful for good than would have been a few thousands of crowns given by Philip to the poor. It was not wealth, however well administered, that could change the face of Rome; for that examples were needed of a heroism well-nigh forgotten in Christendom.

And, moreover, he would leave this example as a bequest to his sons of the Oratory. Surely they, if they live in the spirit of their father, will never forget the miracle wrought by Philip on his dying friend, nor his motive in working it. And not they alone, but all priests who would reflect in their persons and their lives the High-Priesthood of Christ, will bear this miracle in mind. Certainly it is a good thing that priests should have wherewithal to live and to give to the poor; and to condemn them to an abject and compulsory poverty is to degrade them and disable them for a ministry which demands the whole man, and closes to him almost every way of earning his living. But it is a far better and more useful thing that priests should cherish in their hearts that holy virtue of poverty, which makes them truly free, strong, bold, and enterprising; it is a far better thing that they should learn to preserve whole and unstained the dignity of their office, by showing in all their conduct that they do from their hearts disdain earthly riches, and covet the eternal riches alone; far better, in a word, that the world should see that of earthly possessions they ask no more than is needful for the support

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of their life and of the modest dignity of their office, and that in regard of all else they await and are content with the riches of heaven. And these lessons seem to me to be taught us with singular impressiveness by the miracle which Philip wrought upon his dying friend, to escape becoming his heir.

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CHAPTER III.

EXTENSION OF PHILIP'S APOSTOLATE—TARUGI—INDIA.

AT the close of the fourth year of Philip's priesthood, for we are now in 1555, it is necessary that, before continuing our narration, we should glance at the general state of the Church; for the relations of our saint with it begin to be more important and apparent. In this year Pope Julius died, and the election of Marcellus II., his successor, was hailed as a signal blessing to the Church. But his pontificate was like a meteor, seen for a moment, and then breaking up and disappearing; it lasted only twenty-two days. Paul IV. was elected in the same year 1555, and was the first Pope with whom Philip had any personal relations. Paul IV. has stamped his name on the history of his time; and however different the judgments pronounced on him by historians, he may certainly be regarded as one among the most distinguished of the Popes. It is important for us to study his character, principally because the apostolate of our saint expanded greatly during his reign, and because his work had much influence on that movement of reform which the zealous Pontiff had begun in the Church.

Paul IV. was a member of the noble family of the Carafas of Naples; he was Bishop of Chieti, and the associate of S. Cajetan in founding the congregation of the Theatines. Carafa was, by universal consent,

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a man of great learning and eloquence, and of still greater piety; most zealous for the integrity of the faith, and for the reformation of morals. He was seventy-nine years old when he became Pope, but at that advanced age he retained the force and the fire of his youth; so that Muratori likens him still to Mount Vesuvius, near which he was born. It was known that he was naturally irascible, unbending, and rigid to excess. His personal appearance was in keeping with his character. He was tall and very thin, wiry and muscular in frame, and the flash of his piercing, deep-set eyes, inspired respect and even awe. He was unquestionably a great Pope, and if his many great qualities had been always tempered with meekness and prudence, might take rank with the very greatest. His projects and his undertakings show us that he was great, both as a reforming Pope and as a politician. He did not, indeed, effect much in the way of reform, nor did he succeed in his cherished project of freeing Italy from the grasp of foreign powers, and particularly of the Spaniards, a project which was, in his intention, purely in the interest of religion.

But what is most important to us is the fact that Paul IV. was raised to the Pontifical throne because he was regarded as the most rigid and strict of the cardinals, and the most resolutely bent on a thorough reformation in the Church. And indeed, in the Bull in which he announces his elevation to the Chair of Peter he said: "We promise, moreover, and swear that we will do everything in our power to effect and complete at once the reformation of the universal Church and of the court of Rome." On the very day of his coronation he sent off into Spain two monks of Monte Cassino to re-establish the rigour of the ancient monastic discipline,

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and he at once nominated a congregation for effecting a universal reformation; this was divided into three secondary congregations, in each of which were three cardinals, fifteen prelates, and fifty theologians. His foremost and leading thought was the renovation of the piety and discipline of the Church, and he would have done far more to effect that renovation if he had not unhappily connected with it a great movement, partly religious and partly political, which ended in disaster and failure.

The first and most apparent successes of Philip's sacerdotal zeal are intimately connected with this Pontificate, and with the general impulse given to the work of reformation. We have seen what his life was up to the year 1555; but about that time he greatly enlarged the sphere of his action, without in any way changing its essential character. Then he began those bolder and more public works, which at first naturally created for him many difficulties, but which greatly hastened the reform of the clergy and people of Rome. And the practised eye of the historian detects many points of contact between Paul IV. and our saint, not always apparent though most real, and this although the natural character of the two men was so unlike, and their piety took a form and a direction so different.

In 1555 the two rooms at S. Girolamo were found far too small to contain Philip's penitents and hearers, whose numbers increased daily. He had already begun to go through the streets of Rome with a considerable number of seculars and a few priests, to make visits of devotion to some church, generally to the Minerva, where dwelt the Dominicans whom Philip loved so much; and already his penitents and hearers had begun to form around him a kind of family or school,

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with a character and affections of its own. I say a family; because all tenderly love Philip as their common father, follow him about everywhere, ask his guidance in all their concerns, go to see him every day, identify themselves with him and all his cares and interests, and can no longer live apart from him. And I say a school; because all are eager to learn, and to learn of him; all bear one common intellectual stamp; so that, setting aside differences of age and position and education, they have all been evidently nurtured in the same school of supernatural science, and follow all one same method in a study common to all alike. This is one of the most striking things in Philip's life, that all about him catch his spirit, are not only his children but his disciples, and startle us at times by their likeness to him in this or that event of their lives. And this is one of the prerogatives of men who are truly great, that they form a school around them without their will, and often against their will. A light streams forth from them which of itself warms and enlightens others.

Meanwhile Philip's sphere of action was greatly aided in its expansion by the social position and character of the persons who now began to frequent him, to love him, and to place themselves under his direction. He never forsook or forgot the poor and the lowly, who were the first to follow him in his lowliness and poverty. But since he was exercising a ministry of universal charity, it could not be otherwise than that some persons at least of great rank and genius and learning should be drawn to him. Philip welcomed them too with fatherly affection. The first family of distinction the members of which became devoted to Philip, and were by him led onwards to great perfection, was that

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of the Salviati. Gian-Battista Salviati, cousin of Catherine dei Medici, and his wife Porzia dei Massimi, were persons of the highest rank and wealth, brought up in the luxurious splendour of the princely families of Rome. It is not unlikely that they first heard of Philip through that Prospero Crivelli, who was, as we have seen, of the household of Cardinal Antonio Maria Salviati, brother of Gian-Battista. Be this as it may, we find that in this year, 1555, both these noble persons became Philip's penitents and devoted friends, and our saint in a short time drew them away from the vanities of the world to a life of unusual perfection. And it seems to me that they offer to all Christians of our own time to whom God may have given wealth and noble rank, an example of rare beauty and of easy imitation. Salviati had been accustomed to dress with great magnificence, and to be followed whenever he went out by a long train of servants. Now, he dressed with the utmost simplicity, and went about alone; and Philip had to interpose to prevent him from disregarding the rightful claims of his high rank. While therefore he continued to keep up a befitting state, he diligently frequented the sacraments, prayed much and with much fervour, became humble and gentle and unassuming, and patient under suffering; and above all, he accepted readily and with goodwill the continual and painful mortifications with which the saint tested and exercised his virtue. In Philip's view, mortifications are the crucible in which virtue is tested, and all its dross of pride burnt away. In addition to this, Salviati went regularly to the hospitals by Philip's advice, and there rendered to the poor and the sick services of every kind, even the most humiliating and repulsive. We are told that once Salviati found among the sick in the

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hospital a former servant of his own household, and with beautiful humility begged him to get up that he might make his bed for him. The servant, who knew nothing of Salviati's conversion, thought he was only mocking him, and began to expostulate with him. But Salviati's renewed and humble entreaties convinced him at length that his master was speaking in simple earnest, and that he really meant to render him this service of christian humility, and did as he was requested to do. At the close of his life Salviati gave a touching example of christian hope. When told that he was near death he sang exultingly the words of the Psalm: *I was glad when it was said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord*, and so breathed out his soul in Philip's arms. While her husband lived his wife accompanied him in the way of perfection, and on his death she first entered the monastery of S. Lucia in Florence, in order to serve God more perfectly; and then, as the climate of Florence did not suit her, she was received into the convent of S. Catherine on Monte Magnanapoli in Rome.

Together with Salviati, many members of noble and wealthy families began to follow Philip about this time, but we can do little more than record their names. Among the first disciples of the saint we cannot pass over Costanzo Tassone, nephew of the Cardinal di Fano, who became a priest under Philip's direction, and entered the household of S. Charles Borromeo. There was also Gian-Battista Modio, a physician from Santa Severina in Calabria; he was a man of great learning, and his name will be often mentioned in the sequel; Marzio Altieri, a Roman noble; Matteo Stendardi, nephew of Pope Paul IV.; Bernardino Valle of Como; Fulvio Amodei; Giacomo Marmitta, a poet in great

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repute; Giannantonio Santaseverina, Ludovico Parisj, with very many others of the principal families of Italy. All these were not only Philip's penitents, they were imbued with his spirit and loved him tenderly; all of them might be seen either tending and consoling the sick in the hospitals, or praying in the churches; all were living examples of a rare charity, gentleness, and humility. And the example of these men, so distinguished and so well known, did immense good; they made Philip himself more widely known, and gave greater weight to all he said and did. And thus, while our saint was concealing himself as much as he could in his little rooms at S. Girolamo, his influence was spreading amongst the people, the nobles, and the learned.

In regard of all these penitents, many of whom were renowned for learning or for rank, Philip began by urging frequent reception of the sacraments, particularly of holy Communion. And this was much needed in those days. Few priests said mass daily, and the faithful very rarely received holy Communion. In a letter from Buonsignore Cacciaguerra, who together with our saint was striving to bring back the practice of frequent confession and communion, we read: "Things are come to such a pass that frequent confession and communion is looked upon rather as an evil than a good thing by men of the world, and even by some spiritual persons who do not scruple to ask: what is the good of so many confessions and communions?" One of the means by which Philip gradually changed the face of Rome was the inculcating, and in every way promoting, frequent communion as the resource against every enemy of the soul. Besides the spiritual strength which flows into

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our souls from the Source of light and love, the humbling ourselves often before the minister of Christ in confession, and the striving upwards with mind and heart to God in holy Communion, produce in us the most wonderful effects. He who humbles himself often, comes to know himself and his own nothingness; and he who unites himself to God in the mystery of holy Communion, feels his heart expand with charity, and rise into a true greatness.

But among all those who at this time began to follow our saint, there is one who deserves a separate and very special record. I mean Francesco Maria Tarugi of Montepulciano, whose name will so often recur in these pages. We shall see how he was guided by Philip to unusual perfection in his state as a layman; how, still under Philip's guidance, he became a priest and a father of the Oratory and companion of the saint in Rome; how he became in time the founder of the Oratory in Naples; legate of the Pope in France, Spain, and Portugal; Archbishop of Avignon, then of Siena; then a Cardinal of Holy Church; and how at last, loosed from every care, he became once more an humble *Filippino*, and died at the Vallicella, crowned with every merit. We see him now only as a youth, fascinated and subdued by the charm of Philip's words, and drawn towards him with a mighty love. But both the previous life of Tarugi, and the way in which St. Philip gained him for God, are too full of interest to be passed over in silence.

Francesco Maria Tarugi belonged to a noble and wealthy family of Montepulciano, and was nephew of the Popes Julius III. and Marcellus II. His father was at first Senator of Rome, and subsequently superintendent of the Ecclesiastical State; his grandmother on his

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mother's side was a sister of Angelo Poliziano, so celebrated as a scholar and poet. Francesco received a thorough liberal education, and was distinguished not only for a choice and commanding genius, but for the exquisite grace of his manners. Being robust and strong in body, and in mind eager and impetuous, he longed to become a soldier; and in his earlier years took great delight in jousts and tournaments, as well as in hunting. He was of rare personal beauty, and his natural disposition so sweet and gentle that he won the affection of all about him. He had made up his mind to enter upon the career of a soldier, under the command of Fernando Gonzaga, one of the ablest captains of Charles V., when his father, who dreaded for him the perils of war, resolved to divert him from his design by introducing him to a sphere of action much wider than Montepulciano. He took him to Rome, presented him to Cardinal del Monte, who was the uncle of Francesco on his mother's side, and who subsequently became Pope Julius III. His uncle welcomed him with great cordiality and affection, invited him to take up his abode with him, and left him perfect freedom to do what he pleased. The youth gladly accepted the invitation, but could not long avail himself of its advantages, because the Cardinal was not long after sent as a Legate to preside in the Council of Trent. Francesco's father then decided to place him at the court of Ranuccio Farnese, at that time Prior of Venice, and afterwards a Cardinal of Holy Church. Farnese was a nephew of Paul III., and was therefore in a position to further the designs of Francesco. But on the death of Paul III. in 1549 Cardinal del Monte, Francesco's uncle, was elected Pope, and immediately named his nephew chamberlain of honour,

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and assigned him rooms in that part of the Papal palace which is called the Borgia Tower. Here a wider field was opened to his young ambition, but he continued to be kind and affable to all, and was noted as generous and charitable. When the important bishopric of Aversa became vacant the Pope offered it to Francesco; but he declined it, hoping, it would seem, for a dignity still higher. But on the death of the Popes Julius and Marcellus II. Francesco's hopes of advancement at court died away, and the old warrior spirit revived within him; he had even thoughts of entering the service of Cosmo dei Medici, who was then at war with Siena. But Ranuccio Farnese, who had meanwhile become Cardinal of Sant' Angelo, showed him such kindness and made him offers so large, that he induced him to enter his household. This was the turning-point of Francesco's life, the means of his salvation, and the introduction to his holy and apostolic life.

The Cardinal's palace was very near S. Girolamo della Carità, and in his household was a gentleman of great piety, entirely devoted to S. Philip. One day, when this gentleman was going to see the saint, he casually, and without any ulterior motive, mentioned his intention to Francesco; and Francesco, having long wished to know the holy priest whom his friend loved so well, said he should like to go with him, and thus he was presented to Philip. From what has been said, it is easy to picture to ourselves the state of Francesco's soul at that time. His life was without scandal, and free from the grosser vices. He delighted greatly in all worldly pleasures and enjoyments, in pomp and state and splendour; and his heart burned with the desire of glory, which he trusted to acquire either by arms, or by high ecclesiastical dignity. It

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was the year 1556, and Francesco was twenty-nine years of age. The first time that he saw Philip he was struck with the wonderful power of attraction the saint possessed, and thoughts quite unknown before presented themselves vaguely in his mind. He returned several times, and the thoughts gradually took substance and shape; his mind soon became agitated by contending feelings; that simple loving priest at S. Girolamo seemed to him so very wonderful. His heart was being drawn out towards God, without his knowing it, or thinking of it; and then the Jubilee proclaimed by Paul IV. came on, and Francesco made up his mind to go to confession to Philip, with no further thought than to gain the indulgence of the Jubilee. But from the very first our saint had felt drawn towards Francesco, and longed to attach him to himself; perhaps even then he had fixed on him as a fellow-labourer in his apostolate. Francesco made his confession, and then Philip drew him tenderly into his room, and spoke a few simple loving words which sank down into a good and prepared heart. He then proposed to him that they should make an hour of mental prayer together, and Francesco, quite overcome by the charm of Philip's words, consented gladly. He had never prayed so long before; but the hour passed quickly away, leaving in his heart a strange and unwonted sweetness. From that moment he became Philip's dear friend, and laid unconsciously the foundation of his own future greatness. He went again and again to Philip, and very often found the saint in prayer; sometimes he saw him raised from the earth while praying, and the conviction sank gradually and deep into him that Philip was indeed a saint. At the same time there slowly grew up within him a longing desire to give himself up to

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a life of perfection. He spoke to Philip about it, but added that it could not be; the difficulties in his way were so great. Then the saint, looking at him in the light of God, answered him with a smile: "Do not trouble yourself with doubts; before a month is over all difficulties will have vanished." And so it came to pass.

When the month was over, Francesco came back to Philip to make a general confession. While he was making it he found, with amazement and awe, that Philip knew all he had ever done, even his most secret and long-past sins. What was the court any more to him, or the world? Philip filled his whole heart, for Philip was a saint. From that time he placed himself wholly in the saint's hands; and when an old man, after a long life of most perfect obedience, it was his great boast that for fifty years he had been Philip's novice. He was then twenty-nine years old, and to the day of his death, when he was eighty-three, his love of his master and father grew day by day. And Philip loved him greatly in return, and made use of him to do great good in Rome; he was always, as it were, the saint's right hand. When he became a priest he was noted for the holiness of his life, and for an incomparable eloquence, formed on the simple and winning style of his master.

Meanwhile Francesco remained for the time in the household of Cardinal Farnese, but his life was quite other than it had been. He studied the Holy Scriptures, passed much of the day in prayer, and devoted himself to works of charity. This conversion amazed and impressed the Cardinal and all his household, and its meaning and its effects were soon felt throughout Rome.

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But other wonders began now to give to Philip's apostolate a wider range and a greater efficiency. Men not only spoke to one another of his great virtues, and his crowd of devout disciples; they not only reckoned up and pointed out the most distinguished of these, but they began to speak of miracles wrought by him. Besides those which have been already related, and which men of consideration like Tarugi would naturally mention in conversation, many others are attributed to this first year of the Pontificate of Paul IV. People heard that Domenico Saraceni of Collescipolo, who was suffering from disease of the heart, had been healed in virtue of Philip's prayers, and that, moreover, the saint had confidently assured him that he would recover; they heard that a prediction of his to Massimiano Borgo of Verona had been fulfilled, though it referred to a matter the issue of which no one could foresee; it was added that in 1556 he told Guglielmo Bucca that he would die that year, and that the prophecy came true; and that he had sent for Francesco Fortino, a penitent of his, and warned him that a certain merchant to whom he had intrusted a sum of money was about to become bankrupt. It was well known that he was favoured by God with supernatural visions; that on the death of Vincenzio Miniatore, one of the first members of the Trinità, he had seen him borne up into heaven; and that he had seen, all bright with the splendours of holiness, the soul of Mario Tosini, a man of saintly life, who died in that same year. Faith was then less hesitating and suspicious than it is now; events of this nature when related by men of learning and integrity, were thought quite in keeping with a life of much self-sacrifice and charity; they were universally believed, and helped to draw souls to God. And it should be

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added that these prophecies and miraculous graces were attested on oath in the processes of the saint's canonization.

But there were at this time wonders of greater magnitude, and more easily seen and known, and these had greater influence still in spreading throughout Rome the fame of Philip's sanctity, and increasing the fruit of his apostolate. We have already mentioned Gian-Battista Modio of Calabria, a man of learning, and author of a work on the hymns of the B. Jacopone da Orti. He was a friend as well as a penitent of the saint. Now in this year 1556 he had an illness so severe that in a few days the physicians, who were reputed among the best in Rome, Antonio of Pietra Santa and Ippolito Salviani of Castello, gave up his case as hopeless. When the saint heard this he said to several persons that Gian-Battista would get better. Was it only an expression of desire and hope, or was it a gleam of prophetic light that made him repeat this assurance again and again? We shall be able to judge from the sequel. As the illness increased rapidly the sick man received the last sacraments, and those around him began to bewail him as one already dead. At that moment Philip entered the room, looked at him affectionately, and spoke to him a few words of consolation. He then withdrew into another room alone to pray. Such was the vehemence of Philip's prayer for his dying friend that those who in their anxiety could not refrain from watching him, saw him rapt in ecstasy and shining with a supernatural light. A great awe came upon them, and at the same time they felt their hearts gladdened with a great hope. In somewhat more than an hour Philip returned to himself, and went with joy and smiles to the dying man whom he loved, laid

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his hands upon his head, called him by his name, and said, "Gian-Battista, thou wilt not die now; nay, thou shalt very soon be quite well again." At these words the sick man rallied and revived, and began to converse with Philip just as if he were in perfect health; and in a few days was perfectly strong. Nor was this all. A few months later Modio was again attacked by a grave disease, and brought down near to death; and a second time at the prayer of Philip he was restored to health.

It was quite natural that Modio should ever after love Philip with an intense filial love, and should speak of him everywhere. But it is far more important to know that he was so filled with the love of God that he found his chief joy in the hardest, roughest ways of christian perfection. And Philip made great use of his remarkable learning and ability. Layman as he was, he appointed him to preach, and for a long time he discoursed on the lives of the saints. Modio's wife was also a woman of singular piety, and she never forgot that Philip had twice given her husband back to her, and that she owed to him the holy peace of her home. And thus Philip went on diffusing around him the light of grace and of holiness by his preaching, by the sacrament of penance, by prophecies, and by miracles. In his great humility he strove to conceal all that was miraculous in his life, and his disciples rarely spoke of these things, lest they should displease him. But still, much was necessarily known, enough to increase the veneration felt for him as a saint, and to draw great numbers to him for guidance and direction.

And now in the year 1557, we find Philip on the point of leaving all the good he was doing in Rome, to preach the Gospel to the heathen. No other work indeed could be so worthy of a man like Philip as

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this; no other so well became the grandeur of the christian apostolate. To leave home, and relations, and friends, and all the familiar ways of civilized life, and to live amongst barbarous nations, to win souls to Christ, and often to shed one's blood for Christ, is a noble and holy resolve; and were we not so accustomed to it, it would appear to us marvellous in its grandeur. This is precisely what the apostles of Christ did; and the being enabled to do what they did, and as they did it, has an ineffable charm for a christian priest. In 1557 there were special reasons which inspired Philip with this thought. The voyages and discoveries of Columbus and others, the longing to explore lands hitherto unknown, and to investigate the history and the antiquities of the older forms of civilization, had opened new ways in every direction for the feet of those who preach the Gospel of Peace. And besides, after the ravages of the so-called Reformation, the thoughts of many were turned to the conversion of the heathen world, that they might compensate the Church for the losses it had sustained, and arouse and brace to vigorous exertion the torpid nerveless spirit of the christian nations. And thus the propagation of the faith amongst the heathen was regarded as one means for the true reformation of the Church, and harmonized fully with the master-thought of Philip's life.

To this must be added the effects produced on our saint by the marvels of conversion wrought by S. Francis Xavier. Five years had hardly passed away since death had crowned the merits of that great apostle of India; and the hearts of all were still stirred by the memory of his great deeds. Philip knew well the conversions effected by S. Francis along the coast of the

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pearl-fishery, and his astonishing successes in Travancore, in Ceylon, and the neighbouring islands; he had not forgotten the daring voyage to Japan, the visit of the saint to the king, the permission granted him to preach, the numberless conversions that followed, his voyage to Malacca, and his bold resolve to penetrate into China; but all these works had been broken off in the midst, and we may be sure that Philip's heart was wrung with grief. After the death of S. Francis in 1552, the work of conversion was continued by other missionaries, and especially by the Jesuits. The letters which they sent to Rome drew a most vivid picture of the state of India, and of the urgent need of men, filled with zeal and the spirit of self-sacrifice, to gather in the abundant harvest of souls. There were also circulated in Rome some letters of S. Francis Xavier himself, which displayed in all their grandeur and beauty the holiness and the heroism of his great soul.[1] These letters were read from time to time in Philip's room, after the usual conferences and spiritual exercises, and it was easy to see that they produced a deep and powerful impression on him. They not only gave a fresh impulse to his charity, but filled his soul with a yearning compassion. That vast country lying in the shadow of death, without one ray of faith; its inhabitants blind, corrupt, without even the balm of hope; these were ever present to his imagination and affected him strangely. As Jesus wept when from the Mount of Olives He looked upon Jerusalem, so dear, and yet so faithless, so Philip wept as these letters set before his eyes India sunk in unbelief. And then the thought

[1] In his *Storia della Compagnia di Gesù nell' Asia* Bartoli says: Philip Neri was wont to read these letters to inflame his heart with the love of God and of souls, and he gave them to his disciples to read, that this love might be enkindled in them also.

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flashed through his mind, that he might leave his beloved Rome, and hasten to aid in its conversion.

This thought presented itself at first to Philip's mind very vaguely, and without any action on his will; but little by little it became more definite and fixed, and together with it came a longing desire of martyrdom, which gave it an irresistible power and attractiveness. And so at length, one day, he deliberated with some twenty of his most devoted disciples the project of leaving Rome, and setting out, with the blessing of the Pope, to preach the Gospel in India. Among those whom he had chosen to accompany him were Tarugi, Modio, Fucci, and others whose names have not been preserved. But his biographers tell us that Philip hastened on the ordination of some of them, and bade them all be ready to set out as soon as they should have obtained the Pope's consent, and their evangelical mission.

It was a grand and daring resolve, and in every way worthy of Philip; and yet it fills us with amazement. Humble and retiring as he was, he could not fail to know the good he was doing in Rome; he hoped, it may be, that with his twenty companions he might do far greater good in India. It may be, too, that he was in some degree disheartened by seeing that the political enterprises of Paul IV. had compelled him to suspend, if not to abandon, the work of reform he had begun. But, however this may be, though our saint had given out his intention of going, and had found numerous and willing companions in his projected work, he had not as yet an inward certainty that it was the will of God, and even began to entertain a doubt about it. He therefore resolved to pray for light, and to ask counsel of some competent servant of God.

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It is worthy of remark that although Philip was in everything most obedient to his own confessor, yet when anything presented itself to him as being more perfect he was not content with seeking to know the will of God by ordinary means, but trusted entirely to prayer and to supernatural indications of that will. When he had felt himself drawn towards a life of pure contemplation, he had no rest until his duty was made plain by the vision of S. John the Baptist. So now, when he was uncertain whether it was the will of God that he should offer his life for the conversion of India, he was not contented with the counsel of his confessor, nor with that of the many prudent and pious men around him; he looked about him for some saint who might declare to him the will of God with an absolute and supernatural certainty. He knew that there was in the monastery of S. Paul's, outside the walls of Rome, a Benedictine monk of great learning and sanctity, and he therefore betook himself to him for counsel. The monk declared himself unable to decide the anxious question, and referred him to Agostino Ghettini of Florence, a Cistercian, and Prior of the Monastery of S. Vincent and S. Anastasius at the Tre Fontane. And thus Philip continued his way to the monastery, so dear to him as the spot on which S. Paul received the crown of martyrdom, and which was hallowed as the abode of Eugenius III., the beloved disciple of S. Bernard.

The Cistercian Ghettini, of whom Brocchi speaks in his Lives of Florentine Saints, was a man distinguished for his learning no less than for his sanctity. There was in him, say his biographers, a great likeness to the prophet Samuel. He was consecrated to God by his parents before his birth, and became a monk of singular perfection. He had the spirit of prophecy, and

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cherished a special and most tender devotion to S. John the Evangelist, whom he resembled so closely in natural disposition and in his gentle charity. Though a man of great learning, and often favoured with supernatural light, he was exceeding simple in mind and heart. Thus, one day he said to his monks: "My own dear S. John tells me that I am to die on his feast-day;" and so it came to pass. A few years later, on the feast of S. John, he said mass as usual, and then, without any apparent illness, went to bed, received extreme unction, and died. This was just the man whom Philip wanted, the saint for whom he was looking, who should dispel every lingering shadow of doubt by saying: Thus saith the Lord unto thee! Our saint opened his heart to Ghettini, who said that he could not decide the question at once and by his own light; he would pray for some days, and would then give him an answer. A few days passed away, and Philip returned to Ghettini and received this answer: "While I was praying, my son, my dear S. John appeared to me and bade me tell you that *your India is to be Rome.*" What exquisite simplicity, yet what fulness of light, in these few words! Philip's mind and heart both found rest in this explicit answer, and he understood its depth of meaning. It was as though Ghettini had said to him: In this our day not India alone has need of faith. Lay aside the thought of converting those far-off lands, and do thou, and thy twenty companions with thee, stay in Rome. Rome will be to thee, and to thy disciples and friends, a vast field to cultivate. The visible and apparent sphere of thy apostolate will be Rome alone, that Rome which in the counsel of God should be to the whole world the centre, not of truth alone, but also of virtue and of love. In Rome thou shalt expend

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thy toil on the conversion of heretics and unbelievers. In Rome thou shalt labour to lead back the souls of people and of priests from the dead and torpid faith in which they slumber, to a living energetic faith. In Rome thou shalt sow with lavish hand the seeds of virtue and of holiness which will bring forth fruit, not for Rome alone, but for all the Church of God. Thus Philip understood the meaning of these words. There was enough in them to appal him; the field indeed was narrow, but how toilsome and difficult its cultivation!

S. John the Baptist had appeared to bid Philip take up again the commission to his apostolate as a layman, when he was longing to flee away into the desert; and now S. John the Evangelist, by the lips of Ghettini, decides, and irrevocably, the mission given him by God. This, then, was another of those solemn moments in Philip's life which decide his whole future course. Not the wilderness, nor the work of a layman, nor India, but the apostolate of Rome, and through Rome of the universal Church; this was the command so clearly given by God to Philip at the Tre Fontane.

We shall see as we advance how he discharged this most arduous commission. We shall not note any change in him; he will be always the same Philip with whom we have gone along hitherto. There will be about him no assumption, nothing of the air or tone of an apostle, no bustle or excitement, no words of defiance. He will go quietly on, step by step, in the way marked out for him by God; that is all. Henceforward, as before, those steps will seem small while they are really great; they will bring him out into fuller light, and yet deepen his longing for obscurity and shade; they will reveal his wisdom while he strives

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to appear ignorant and foolish; they will make him the reformer of the City and its clergy, while we shall never hear him breathe the word *reform*—that word so proudly used by many will always seem to him presumptuous and unbecoming on his own lips.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE ORATORY OF S. GIROLAMO—THE SEVEN CHURCHES —PERSECUTION.

ONE of the considerations which weighed most with Philip in his deliberation about going to India, was, that he had twenty companions prepared and fitted for that arduous mission. The number is surprising. If there were around Philip twenty men, unmarried, so filled with zeal, so courageous, so detached in heart from the world and from the pleasant life of Rome, as to embark on an enterprise so bold and so toilsome, we may reasonably conclude that some hundreds of followers had attached themselves to him; and indeed, as soon as it was known that he was thinking of going to India, his own little room and the room he had added to it became too small for his disciples. It was then that he applied to the deputies of S. Girolamo for permission to construct over one of the aisles of the church a room for the meetings of his followers. This permission was readily granted; the room was built, and it was called the Oratory: and this is the Oratory of S. Girolamo of which I have spoken as still remaining. This name, Oratory, which perhaps goes back to the sixth century, when it was given to the small churches with no baptisteries which were near the catacombs, was on many accounts dear to Philip. He chose it for this new room, and he afterwards chose it

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as the name of his congregation; and, as we shall see, it most accurately indicates its character and its aims. It is the name of something belonging to the past, revived and adapted by Philip; and it is in keeping with his grand idea of reforming the discipline of the Church of the sixteenth century by turning the eyes and hearts of men back to the primitive times of Christianity.

No contemporary memoir tells us who gave Philip the money for this new building; there would be no difficulty about it, for many of his disciples were rich. It was built in a very short time, and Philip now gave a more distinct form, as well as a wider range, to the exercises of his disciples. There was no change made in the common prayers, nor in the custom of interweaving with the sermons simple conversations or conferences, if we may call them so, on religious subjects. The great change was, that Philip would not any longer be the only preacher; in this very year 1558 he charged Tarugi and Modio, both laymen, to speak either on some christian virtue, or on the lives of the saints and the history of the Church. The sermons on the christian virtues should, in Philip's intention, set forth their beauty, and lead men to love them. The lives of the saints proved that the life and actions of real christians bear out and confirm the belief of their minds, and that religion is not merely a doctrine, but a life, and a life most energetic and fruitful. The history of the Church was in part polemical, in that it refuted the errors of the day; and in part a confirmation of the dogmas of christian faith and morals, by showing their unbroken tradition from age to age. Not long after this, Philip chose three other laymen, and charged them to preach; they were Cesare Baronio,

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Giovan Francesco Bordino, and Antonio Fucci. Thus the first preachers of the Oratory were laymen, inflamed with the love of God, and far advanced in the ways of perfection. All these followed with loving fidelity the style of preaching which Philip had introduced; they preached almost every day, and always with great effect. They had not studied eloquence; their sermons were altogether unlike those which were then in vogue; there were no needless ornaments of speech, no quaint exaggerations; their style was their own, and it was itself an innovation. But when they spoke of God, and of the Kingdom of God, it was as if Philip were speaking; so closely did they copy, almost unconsciously, the style and manner of the master they loved. Nor did the fact that they were laymen detract from the good effect of their preaching, because their known holiness clothed their words with authority, and every one recognized on them the impress of the master whom all Rome already regarded as a saint.

Now that they had removed into the new Oratory, a more regular and fixed form was given to their meetings. They began in winter at the evening Ave Maria, and an hour earlier in summer. To the prayers, sermons, and conferences the saint resolved to add some kind of bodily mortification; and as it was then the use in religious houses of strict observance to take the discipline, he enjoined that his disciples also should take it three times a week. Although Philip was very sparing in his recommendation of bodily mortifications, this use of the discipline, which has never been discontinued in the Oratory, shows that he did not undervalue them even at a time when, for reasons we shall see, internal and spiritual mortifications were, in his judgment, most needed. It is one thing to feel that, at times when the

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spirit of pride is dominant, internal mortifications are most especially useful; it is quite another thing to say that outward and bodily mortifications are things of the past, which have lost their value. Since our bodies are always in rebellion against our souls, and since Christ suffered for us such pains in His most sacred Body, outward mortifications have their root in grand and abiding principles, and are great helps to spirituality and virtue.

And this is the way in which the first Oratory of *Filippini* grew into being at S. Girolamo della Carità. We shall never lose sight of it, and shall have occasion to speak in their place of additions which were made from time to time, such as sacred hymns and instrumental music, to give cheerfulness and variety to the meetings. Let us dwell for a moment on the fact that this Oratory was not a purely priestly work. Laymen and priests met together and joined in prayer, and laymen were associated with Philip, a priest, in preaching the word of God. And here we are naturally taken back in thought to those meetings of the faithful in the earliest age of the Church, when all together, priests and laymen, served God with gladness and simplicity of heart, persevering together in prayer, and being of one mind and of one heart. And in this sixteenth century, when protestantism was sowing the seeds of a disunion at once mournful and disastrous between the clergy and the laity, Philip bound them together in a common life with the bonds of love, and made the layman almost a minister of the Divine Word, under the fatherly and loving guidance of the clergy. I do not know whether Philip foresaw the terrible results of that disunion in our own day, but when I remember that he was a saint, and that love is gifted with keen

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foresight, I do not think it improbable that he did. But however this may be, it is certain that, under the guidance of Divine Providence, he acted as if our times lay spread out clearly before his eyes.

And now that Philip knew with an absolute certainty that Rome was to be his India, he was inflamed with a longing to extend by yet other means the blessings of his apostolate. It has been said that, while he was still living in the world, he often visited the seven churches alone, and always with profit and delight. Now that he was a priest he did not give up these visits. The only difference was that, whereas he used formerly to go alone, now he took with him some few of his most intimate disciples and others who might desire it. At first some twenty-five or thirty accompanied him, and their numbers gradually increased, for Philip made these visits with a singular fervour of devotion. After the first four years of his priesthood they had become quite a large body. Our humble saint never seemed to notice how many were drawn together, rather from an impulse of devotion and his own winning example, than from any counsel or settled plan. It was with this as with all that the saint undertook. He began very humbly and with very few; but the love of God blessed this beginning, the few became many, the little seed a great and fruitful tree. Thus he teaches us always to work as simple instruments in the hands of God, and nothing else. If God is in us with the fulness of His love, the smallest thing we do is great, and has great results; if He is not in us, our greatest efforts will produce shadows only, and not realities, vain and fleeting as a meteor.

In the year 1559 these visits to the seven churches were made thus. When Philip had fixed a day, which

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he did generally in the Carnival or in Easter week, all who wished to take part in the visit assembled at an appointed hour in S. Peter's, and then made their way dispersedly or in groups to S. Paul's. There they were formed into companies, who went together in procession to S. Sebastian's. There would be about two thousand, all men, some priests and religious, and the others laymen of every rank; they were mostly men of great devotion, but there were never wanting some who went from curiosity, and others wavering between good and evil, at one moment hurried away from God by the storm of passion, and then smitten to the heart by the rebuke of conscience. There were always some Dominicans and Capuchins; these latter were then in the freshness and fervour of their recent foundation; and sometimes the whole novitiate of the Dominicans might be seen. They were distributed into companies of two or three hundred each, and Philip passed from one to the other, and was the life and soul of all. They sang and played on instruments of music as they went, but all was serious and devout, nothing was heard but sacred hymns or psalms. At intervals prayers and litanies would be said, followed by pious conversation on God and the things of God. The recollectedness, the modesty, the quiet order of the procession, were perfect. When they had reached S. Sebastian's, mass was sung, and a very large number received Holy Communion. After mass they halted at some pleasant and convenient spot, and took the simple meal which had been provided by the common charity of all. They ate in silence, broken only at intervals by music and singing. The provision was sparing and very simple; some eggs and cheese, a little fruit, and water, with some of the ordinary wine of the country; the table

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was the earth, with its covering of grass and flowers. The spot appointed for this meal was generally the villa of some wealthy Roman family; at first that of Virginia Massimi, then that of the Crescenzi, and afterwards that of the Mattei. When their simple meal was over, there was a short recreation, and then they all went in the same order and manner as before to S. John Lateran, and thence to Santa Croce, S. Lorenzo, and S. Mary Major's. In all these churches there were appointed prayers, and in five of them there was usually a short sermon. So ended a pilgrimage of eleven miles, in which the whole day had passed away. And thus, if any one of the pious procession had looked back to Judæa as it was in the time of the Gospels, he would have remembered how Jesus Christ drew multitudes after Him in the way, how He taught them and healed them, and made their hearts glad with the love of God and of the kingdom of heaven.

Philip took great delight in these visits to the seven churches; they were to him recreations as well as acts of piety. The exercise, the fresh air, the pleasant fields, the company of so many persons united by Christian charity, and in many cases by brotherly affection, and all this under the bright sunny sky of Italy, filled the hearts of all with a bounding gladness; and then the hymns and sacred music, the quiet modesty which sat on the countenances of all, and, more than anything else, the presence of Philip, gave to this gladness a religious and even a heavenly character. Philip, with his ineffable sweetness of look and manner, was so far from checking this joy of heart that he was himself the soul of it. He loved virtue, and not narrowness and pettiness of soul; modesty and not cant; in all things and always a composed and serene peace of soul. It was

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especially in these pilgrimages that Philip began to display that joyous, cheerful, even sportive piety which is one of his most characteristic marks, and of which we shall have occasion to speak more at length.

But above all this, the saint rejoiced at the great good to souls which was done by these holy and festal days of devotion. One effect of them was a great increase in the number of his penitents; many who had long neglected the sacraments now eagerly resorted to them; the occasions of sin, so many and so fatal during the carnival, were removed; and all derived from them an increase of fervour and spiritual strength. Philip saw all this, and made the best use of it. Some he drew to frequent the Oratory, and then sent them every Sunday with others of his disciples to visit the sick in the hospitals of S. John Lateran, the Madonna of Consolation, and Santo Spirito; some, and there were at least thirty of them, he sent to the hospitals every day. And then he used to take with him the more fervent among them to visit some church, or to join in the night-office of the Dominicans at the Minerva, or of the Capuchins at S. Bonaventura. They were all skilled in the Church chant, and would often sing Lauds in these churches. So that these pious pilgrimages were to Philip a blessing and a joy, not only for their own sake, but because they furnished him occasion to do much good, and extended in all directions the effect of his labours.

But this good work was too fair, too useful, and we may add too apparent and visible, to escape difficulties, and these were many and very great. Not difficulties only, but conflicts and persecutions arose; and calumnies and insults too, which affected both Philip and his disciples the more that they came from those

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from whom they least expected them. And yet how mightily they contributed towards the perfection of our saint! What examples of Christian endurance they gave us, and how they strengthened and established the work they were intended to overthrow! But that we may understand this part of Philip's life we must go back again to the pontificate of Paul IV., because the state of the Church and the character and position of the Pope were not without their influence on what now befell him.

On the failure of the noble attempt made by Paul IV. to free the Church by arms from the partisans and favourers of Protestantism, and Italy from the grasp of the foreigner, his zeal for the reform of ecclesiastical discipline flamed out anew, and defeat had not soothed the harshness of his natural character. No sooner did he discover the grave misdeeds of Cardinal Carafa and his two other nephews than he convoked the sacred college, called God to witness his personal innocence, punished with extreme rigour the nephews on whom he had lavished favours so great, treated their mother with stern severity, and, in his zeal for justice, closed his heart to compassion. He then laid aside all thoughts of war, and devoted himself with all the ardour of his nature to the work of renewing and purifying discipline in Rome. He raised the dignity of the divine worship, removed from it every blemish, banished from the churches all statues and paintings which he deemed offensive to Christian modesty, and inquired most rigidly into the mode of collecting the alms of the faithful, especially for the Holy Sacrifice. To show what he meant by reform he had a medal struck, representing our Divine Lord casting out of the temple with a scourge those who bought and those who sold; he

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banished from Rome all monks who had left their convents; he made for his court the most stringent laws in regard of the fasts of the Church and the Easter communion; he compelled the cardinals to preach, and he himself preached with great zeal and fervour; marriage dispensations were very rarely granted; and he forbade the clergy everything which might either excite or indicate a love of money. These and other like reforms shed a lustre on the pontificate of Paul IV., and Philip welcomed them with joy. The two men were strongly contrasted in natural disposition; each in his office was striving to improve the condition of the Church, but by methods very different; and yet the revival brought about by the resolute pontiff was hailed by Philip with thankfulness and hope.

Meanwhile the Pope was employing other means to effect his great end. A few years before, in 1542, he had, as cardinal, advised the establishment of the Inquisition in Rome, in order the more effectually to confront the new heresy, then flushed with its earlier successes, and boldly aggressive. When he became Pope he not only upheld this tribunal, but excited it to greater vigilance in detecting, and greater energy in repressing, innovation. The times were unquestionably full of peril; there was in the minds of many a passion for things new, and in matters of faith novelty is error; and this peril, together with the inflexible sternness of the Pope, rendered the procedure of the Inquisition more rigid, and sometimes even vexatious from its proneness to suspicion. The Pope was inspired with a true and most ardent zeal for the purity of the faith; but, as was natural, the excited passions of the time tended to debase the purity of this zeal and to taint its action. It is certain that in those days

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accusations were too readily received and were too often unjust and unfounded; and that very trivial indications sufficed to bring a man under suspicion of heresy. The fact that Cardinal Morone, and the learned Dominican Egidio Foscherari, Bishop of Modena, were both kept for two years in prison as suspected heretics, until their innocence was recognized by the successor of Paul IV., was enough to strike men's hearts with terror and apprehension.[1]

Such was the state of Rome when Philip had founded his Oratory of S. Girolamo, and had ventured to give to the visits to the seven churches the publicity as well as the form we have been describing. It seemed to him that this frank and public call to the people to follow him, that he might bring them back to God, was quite in harmony with the reforms so resolutely enforced by the Pope, and that it was their application and their extension. While the Pope was proceeding by way of authority and the action of law, it seemed that a saint might move towards the same end by way of charity and the action of the priestly ministry. But these pious visits had endeared Philip to the people; this was a crime in the eyes of the envious and the malevolent, a crime too often dearly expiated in this world of ours. And thus it came to pass that there suddenly broke on Philip a storm of envious gossip, of calumny, and malignant suspicions, which, absurd and repulsive as they seem to us now, darkened his fair fame for a time. This storm was the more violent and overwhelming that it burst from two very different quarters. The evil, who could not tolerate any effort

[1] See Muratori's Annals, under the years 1559 and 1560; Ranke's account of Paul IV. in his History of the Popes; Broccato, *Vita di Paolo IV.*, Caracciolo, *Vita di Paolo IV.*, and other historians of that time.

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towards reform, and who detested the Pope, naturally hated this great work of our saint. And amongst good men there were some, at least, who looked with disfavour and some degree of apprehension on what was undeniably good, but at the same time so new, and, in their judgment, hazardous. Every one in Rome began to talk about Philip; many judged him unfavourably, and he was everywhere spoken against. The tide was rising; the waves grew into billows white with foam; and our dear saint stood without shelter in the unpitying storm. One said he was an ambitious man, who wanted to get a name by drawing the multitude after him; some talked of the provision made for the simple meal of the pilgrims, and called him a glutton and a wine-bibber; some were quite sure that these large gatherings of people boded no good to the public peace; and some saw serious danger in the exercises of the Oratory, and the preaching of laymen. Others went still further: they declared that Philip was a sower of scandals and of evil seed, and that he ought to be dealt with as a teacher of new doctrines and a *setter-up of a new sect*. This last calumny is especially noted by Gallonio; and when we think of Paul IV., and of the sensitiveness and activity of the Inquisition, we begin to tremble for our saint; great trials are, undoubtedly, coming on him, and if they do not crush him, it will be that the loving Providence of God rebukes and quells the storm. Philip heard all this, and knew well the drift and possible result of it; but it did not shake his steadfastness, nor lessen the peace and the gladness of his heart. He saw that a great trial was coming on him, and he prepared to meet it bravely. He enjoined on his disciples the utmost prudence and forbearance; he forbade them to speak even a word against their revilers and

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calumniators, for he knew that some of them at least were good men, led astray by others, or blinded by their own weak prejudices.

Meanwhile the calumnies so industriously circulated were reported to some persons of high position and great authority in the Church, and at last they reached the ear of the Cardinal of Spoleto, a prelate of impetuous and ill-regulated zeal.[1] Our saint's biographers do not tell us whether the Pope himself had heard of them. From the result of the affair we may conjecture that he had; but it was the office of the Cardinal Vicar to investigate the charges, and to decree punishment if they were proved. When the accusations against Philip were laid before the Cardinal of Spoleto, he either did not investigate them at all, or he glanced hastily at them, and that, with his official tendency to suspicion. He at once summoned Philip before him, and treated him as an already convicted criminal. He fixed on him an angry and contemptuous look, rebuked him harshly, threatened him with imprisonment if he ever again dared to go about the city or to the seven churches with any companions, suspended him for a fortnight from hearing confessions, prohibited the exercises of the Oratory without a fresh permission, and lastly, he required Philip to pledge himself to come up for judgment whenever he might be summoned; and ended with the words: "I am surprised that you are not ashamed of yourself, you who affect to despise the world, and yet go about enticing numbers of people to follow you; and all to win favour with the multi-

[1] The biographers of our saints do not say who was at that time Cardinal Vicar, but from a letter of the Dominican Ercolani, who was living at the time in Rome, we find that it was the Cardinal of Spoleto. The letter itself is in the appendix to the life of Savonarola, by Acquarone, 1857.

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tude, and to work your way, under pretext of sanctity, to some prelacy or other." We see that the Cardinal Vicar knew very little of Philip. Our saint had received in unruffled peace the wrong done him, the charges brought against him, and the punishment inflicted on him. But now he thought that silence would be regarded as a confession of guilt, and therefore he answered with great humility: "I began these exercises for the glory of God, and for the glory of God I am ready to give them up. I look on the commands of my superiors as above all other things, and I gladly obey them now. I began the visits to the seven churches to recreate the minds of my penitents, and to withdraw them from those occasions of sin which abound during the carnival. This was my purpose, and no other." This answer, at once manly and humble, did not please the Cardinal; his mind was evidently swayed by prejudice and suspicion, and so it only irritated him the more. He looked at Philip with great anger and said: "You are an ambitious fellow, what you are doing, you are not doing for the glory of God, but to *get together a sect*." With all his patience Philip felt all the bitterness of these taunts; and so, raising his eyes to the crucifix which hung on the wall, he said: "O Lord, Thou knowest whether what I do I do to make a sect, and that suffices me." And then he quietly withdrew.

We can scarcely imagine the anguish of Philip's heart during this trial. It is hard to bear the sorrows that come on us from our own corrupted nature, and perhaps harder still to bear those laid on us by ignorant and wicked men. But no sorrows are so keen as those inflicted on us by persons who are to us the representatives of God and His justice, and whom we therefore

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respect and love. To feel one's self despised by the good, when all the aim of our life is to do good; to be condemned by the ministers of God's truth and justice, when all our life is a sacrifice of self to justice and truth; this is indeed a keen and unutterable sorrow, and only he who has felt it knows how hard it is to bear. And because this sorrow exceeds in bitterness all other sorrows, we find it always the portion of the saints, and pre-eminently of Jesus, king and pattern of saints, who was persecuted even to death by the priests of the people of God. It was as a sword piercing Philip's heart that he was declared guilty, not only by the enemies of the Pope and the Church, but by the Vicar of the Pope himself, and that this sentence was approved by so many good men in Rome. For many of these now turned against him. Even in S. Girolamo there were some who deemed him, and made him feel that they deemed him, an ambitious and intriguing man. And thus, without any fault of his own, Philip was cast out into the camp of the enemies of the Pope and the Church, and suspected of false doctrines and new sects, at the very time when he was sacrificing himself for the welfare and reform of that Church which was to him, after God, the one chief object of his love.

The result of these things was, that Philip's position become every day more painful and embarrassing. Ecclesiastical authority was against him; the ungodly and profane treated him with unrestrained insolence; of the good, some who had been his friends were now alienated from him, and others, who were still devoted to him, could not keep silence, and were sometimes imprudent. Philip himself yielded a perfect obedience to the command of his superiors. He gave up hearing

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confessions, and forbade his penitents to throng about him, or follow him, or to speak in any way of the Cardinal Vicar or any of his enemies. But though his penitents loved him much they did not in this always obey him, and indeed it was the greatness of their love which made it impossible to them to obey. They would linger in the streets which they knew he would pass, look at him with affectionate sadness, and then follow him afar off. The saint noticed this, and rebuked them sharply; but prohibition and rebuke only increased their longing to see him. He did everything in his power to stop their speaking against his adversaries. He found a thousand excuses for those who were persecuting him; he was always calm and gentle, and ever bright with gladness; he put the best interpretation he could on all that was said against him; and was disquieted with apprehension that his enemies might be less esteemed or respected. And, above all, he prayed for them with great fervour, and with many tears; and he urged his disciples to follow his example. He often said to them: "This persecution is not for your sake, but for mine; God desires to make me humble and patient, and when I have gathered from this trial the fruit He wills me to gather, it will pass away." What simplicity and what peace there is in these words, and what profound wisdom too!

Although Philip felt that this state of things must soon become unendurable, he used no human means to change it. Exact obedience to his superiors, unceasing prayer to God,—these he knew would in the end overcome everything. And so it came to pass. Philip prayed with more than his wonted fervour, and cast all his care on God; but he refused to justify himself, or to allow others to justify him. And God heard his

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prayer, and gave him a sign that the moment of triumph was at hand. One day, towards the end of the fortnight during which he was forbidden to hear confessions, he was praying in the Oratory with some of his disciples, when suddenly an unknown priest came in. His habit was coarse, and he was girded with a cord; no one had ever seen him before, none ever saw him afterwards. A strange awe rested on the souls of all while the priest said that "he came to them on the part of certain religious, who had received a revelation from God in regard of what was being done against the exercises of the Oratory; and that they should at once begin the forty-hours' prayer, from which great effects would follow." He then drew near to Francesco Tarugi and said to him: "This persecution will soon end in the establishment and increase of the work; God will change the hearts of those who are now opposing it, so that they will become its supporters; those who persist in attacking it will be severely punished by God, and the prelate who has been foremost and most unjust in the persecution will die within a fortnight." When he had said these words he was seen no longer, and his predictions were verified by the event. Philip was cited before some ecclesiastical judges, and was thus enabled to prove his own innocence, and to show the injustice of the charges and complaints made against him. The suspicions which had gathered around him vanished like a mist, and his modesty and humility, together with his yearning charity, struck his judges with amazement, and showed them what Philip really was. They gave him permission to hear confessions and to preach, to go to the seven churches, and to do whatever he pleased for the glory of God and the good of souls.

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It would seem that all the judges were not equally in favour of the saint, for Gallonio says: "One member of the tribunal, a man of great and high rank, persisted in his harshness and wrong, and did all he could to disparage and oppose the servant of God; and before the fifteen days were over, on the 23d of May in that year 1559, he was overtaken by sudden and unexpected death." From Ercolani we learn that this judge of high rank was the Cardinal of Spoleto himself, "who, persisting in his prohibition of some of the prayers and the general communions, died most miserably of apoplexy, without communion, or confession, or prayer."

I have quoted as they stand the words of this holy religious, who was an intimate friend of the saint, and subsequently bishop of Perugia; and I would add that good men of those times were disposed to regard as the punishment of crime and sin, many visitations which seemed to be simply in the order of nature. Better is it for us to look at them with a salutary awe, and to adore with all humility the mysteries of the Providence of God, saying with S. Paul: *How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways!* And we may note here for our own guidance that Philip would never allow any one to say a word against that prelate, and sternly rebuked those who spoke of his sudden death as a judgment of God. Bacci relates that when one of his penitents was saying something of this kind, he stopped him at once with the words: "Hold your peace."

It is not easy to find out what part Pope Paul IV. took in this great tempest stirred up against Philip. The biographers of the saint tell us, and it is worthy of note, that when the Pope was at length perfectly assured of Philip's innocence, and saw clearly that God

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was guiding him in all his actions, he deeply regretted what had taken place. He felt that the harshness and rashness of his vicar had led the ecclesiastical authorities into error, and he made amends for this by marks of singular kindness to Philip. He sent him at once two candles, such as are burned in the Pope's chapel on the Feast of the Purification, telling him that "he gave him fullest leave to go to the seven churches, and to resume his exercises, and go on with everything as he had done before." He added that he regretted much that he could not be present at the exercises in person, and commended himself to Philip's prayers.

When tidings reached Philip and those around him of the tender kindness of the Pope towards them, and of the end of the persecution, there was great gladness of heart and thankfulness to God. It was a real and a christian triumph; one of those rare moments in which, even here on earth where sin and error bear sway, truth and justice prevail, and a sweet and secret gladness fills the hearts of those who have chosen suffering for their inheritance, and feel evermore the bitterness of the Cross. And Philip and his disciples celebrated their triumph in noble and befitting fashion. They gave thanks to God and blessed His Holy Name. They gathered together, more numerous than ever, and went with grateful gladness to the seven churches. And their hymns of praise were that day louder and sweeter, for their hearts were touched with a deeper joy, and their prayers more fervent and availing. And when they lay down to rest at night, weary with the long pilgrimage, each one had in his heart *the peace which passes all understanding;* and all felt as they had never felt before that God was with Philip, and that Philip had given them one great lesson more of humility and patience.

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CHAPTER V.

S. PHILIP AND SAVONAROLA.

We have it on the testimony of grave writers that S. Philip held in great veneration the memory of the austere and fearless Fra Girolamo Savonarola, and that he did not scruple to have in his room a portrait of the great reformer with a glory round his head, such as now distinguishes the saints.[1] This is attested by many witnesses; amongst others by Francesco Zagara, himself an Oratorian, and by Fontana in his *Monumenti Domenicani*. Benedict XIV. confirms it in fuller detail in his golden book on the Beatification of the Servants of God.[2] He tells us that when the cause of the beatification of a Florentine saint, Catherine dei Ricci, was before the Roman congregation, he himself, being at that time Promoter of the Faith, objected that the holy nun had, in some bodily affliction, invoked in prayer Fra Girolamo Savonarola, and that, in doing so, she had sinned. The objection was at once overruled, and by express command of Benedict XIII. was set aside as irrelevant; but it revived the old dispute on the character of that very remarkable man, and throws a clearer light on S. Philip's feeling towards him. The promoters of the cause, continues Benedict XIV., said, amongst

[1] In the sixteenth century it was customary to give this sign of veneration to the uncanonized servants of God; it is not now permitted.

[2] Lib. iii. cap. xxv. n. 18.

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other things, that many prudent and holy persons had done the same thing as Catherine had done; that Bzovio relates, on authority above suspicion, that S. Philip Neri kept in the chapel adjoining his room, the portrait of Savonarola, with rays of glory about his head, and that this statement is repeated, on the testimony of many persons, by the Bollandists. Other witnesses, again, attest the same fact in the processes of S. Philip's canonization; and they relate a miracle, of which we shall speak presently, which proves the great veneration in which the saint held Fra Girolamo. It is also well known that Philip often read the writings of Savonarola, especially the *Triumph of the Cross*, and that he used them for the instruction of his spiritual children. There are still preserved in the library of the Vallicella, among the books which once belonged to S. Philip, and which were given by him to the congregation, five of Savonarola's works.[1] Nor was S. Philip alone in honouring the memory of the great Dominican Friar. S. Catherine dei Ricci, S. Francis of Paula, the Blessed Maria Bagnesi, Colomba of Rieti and Catherine of Racconigi, all cherished with affectionate veneration the memory of Savonarola. Some of the Popes esteemed him greatly. Julius II. declared him worthy to be enrolled amongst the Blessed; Raphael has given us his portrait in the *stanze* of the Vatican among the Doctors of the Church; Paul III. compelled Cosmo the First to reinstate in S. Mark's in Florence the Dominicans who had been expelled in hatred of Savonarola; Clement VIII. held him in singular veneration, had serious thoughts of canonizing

[1] The name of the saint in these books is not, in all probability, in his own handwriting. A copy of the *Trattato della Revelazione della Reformatione della Chiesa*, with the undoubted autograph of *Filippo Neri*, is now in the possession of Signor Carlo Capponi of Florence.

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him, and allowed his portraits to be seen in Rome, with rays about his head, and with the titles of Blessed, and Doctor, and Martyr; and to sum up all, Benedict XIV. places the name of Savonarola in the list he drew up of Saints and Blessed, and others renowned for their sanctity.[1]

Philip's veneration for Savonarola led him to follow his example in some things, while avoiding those defects which overcast with their shadow the close of the otherwise grand life of the Dominican. But before we attempt to trace the affinity which unquestionably binds together these two great men, it is well that we should clear from our way the difficulties which naturally present themselves when we would speak of a man so singular and apart as was Savonarola, and on whom judgments so conflicting have been passed. And I am not without hope that what I shall say in this chapter may not only endear the more to us our own beloved saint, and clear our conception of his mission, but also tend to set in a truer light the character of that saintly though impetuous man, whose life forms so important a part of the history of the Church in the fifteenth century.

Now that every detail of the life of this great man has been investigated with affectionate care, the attempt which has been made in Germany and elsewhere to class him with those whose heresies prepared the way for Luther is only a reckless and groundless calumny. From his life, as well as from his writings, it is abundantly clear that in regard of the faith he was always without blemish or suspicion. Waiving the testimony

[1] See the end of the treatise *De Beatificatione*, &c., Ed. Bassano. Also the Proper Office of Girolamo Savonarola, written in the sixteenth century, and published with an introduction by Guasti at Prato in 1863. It is now extremely rare.

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of his other writings, in his *Trionfo della Fede Cristiana*[1] he speaks of the Primacy of the Pope in words which might have been used by S. Jerome or S. Peter Damian, the two saints whom he most resembles. On every doctrine of the faith, and especially on this, which is the very touchstone of Catholic teaching, the great Dominican is fully and unequivocally orthodox. And thus if, to the unspotted purity of his faith, the holiness of his life, and his burning zeal for the glory of God, he had added a full and sincere obedience to Pope Alexander VI.,—for whatever the faults of his private life, this Pope was still the Vicar of Christ—he might have been deemed worthy to be ranked with the two saints just mentioned. His character was moulded on a type which is rare, and perhaps unique, in the history of the Church. In many respects he shed lustre on Christianity, although at the close of his life his great light was dimmed by an act of disobedience to the Pope, which we must frankly and unconditionally condemn. Many reasons indeed, which it is beside my purpose to examine, may have extenuated his error of judgment and his fault of conduct; it is a greater consolation to me to believe that his violent death, accepted with a resignation so perfect, and comforted with the sacraments and indulgences of our Mother the Church, effaced from his soul the stain with which an intemperate zeal and the counsels of injudicious friends had disfigured it. I have no hesitation in affirming that Savonarola would have been incomparably greater than he was, if, in the last year of his life, he had been humbly obedient. We do not free him from this guilt by contrasting his holy and lofty character with that

[1] In folio, without date or place of publication; reprinted in Florence in 1509.

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of Alexander VI.[1] Far better is it to admit at once the sin of Savonarola, if we also remember the piety and the fortitude with which he expiated it in his death. Nor should we forget his fair and unblemished life, nor the rectitude and purity of his intentions. And hence it is that many holy men, and many great Popes, have held his memory in honour, and that S. Philip treasured his portrait, loved his teaching, and in some things followed his example.

We have seen that S. Philip received the first nourishment of his youthful piety from the Dominicans of S. Marco in Florence, who naturally cherished the memory of their own Fra Girolamo as that of a saint. If at Rome in the sixteenth century medallions of him were publicly sold, with the inscription, *doctor and martyr*,[2] we may imagine what was said and done in S. Marco by Fra Girolamo's beloved and devoted disciples.[3] But

[1] Some writers have tried to vindicate Savonarola by contrasting his austere virtue with the depravity of Alexander VI.; but no depravity can justify disobedience. The duty of obedience to the Pope in all that is not manifestly sin rests, not on his personal holiness, but on his being the vicar and representative of Christ. It is Christ Himself who commands us in the person of His vicar, and hence the duty of obedience. The private life of Alexander VI. admits no excuse. The attempt made by P. Olivier, in his *Le Pape Alexandre VI. et les Borgia*, has given us only a romance in place of a history; and P. Matagne, one of the Bollandists, has pointed out some of his errors in the *Revue des questions historiques*, 1871-2. Neither the Church nor the Popes need or can admit such defence. There are facts in the life of Alexander VI. which we cannot deny, since they are not denied by Rinaldi, Spondano, Bzovio, Becchetti, Ciacconio, Possevino, Mariana, Zurita, the Bollandists, and other learned men. Our true glory is this—that for one bad Pope we can point to a hundred good ones; and that the worst of Popes was never permitted to err in defining and promulgating anything that pertains to Catholic faith and morals.

[2] Bartoli, *Apologia del Savonarola*, p. 182.

[3] Cardinal Alessandro dei Medici was one of Philip's most intimate and devoted friends, though the memory of Savonarola was hateful to him as an abiding menace to the recently founded princedom of his family. He writes to the Grand Duke: "They (the Dominicans of S. Marco) celebrate his feast as that of a martyr; they preserve his relics as if he were a saint, even the beam of the gallows from which he

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however this may be, it is certain that Savonarola and S. Philip set before themselves the same great end,—to stem the torrent of paganism, and to reform the corrupted morals of the christian nations by setting up the kingdom of Christ in their minds, in their hearts, and in their lives. Both shrank at first in their humility from the dignity of the priesthood; Philip lived many years in the world, and Fra Girolamo became a Dominican at the age of twenty-two, with the intention of remaining always a lay brother. Both adopted the same means to reform the lives of many persons in the Church. They revived the worship of God by insisting on the frequent use of the sacraments; they subdued the minds and hearts of men with simple, real, and earnest sermons, altogether different from those then in vogue; they gathered the people together for public worship, and engaged music and singing, poetry and the arts, in the service of religion. The aim of these two great reformers was the same, and there is therefore a striking similarity in the means they used to attain it. In regard of preaching, we know that Savonarola began his ministry with an exceeding simplicity of style, so that the people of Florence, as he tells us himself in his sermon on Low Sunday, murmured at the absence of the eloquence to which they had been accustomed; and so Philip's preaching was throughout his life most simple and unadorned, and his disciples formed themselves on his example. The sermons of both have the same directness and force, the same unction, the same rigid exclusion of the profane allusions and abstruse disquisitions then

was hanged, the iron hooks which bore his weight, his habit, his hoods, the bones left unconsumed by the fire, his ashes, his hair shirt; they treasure the wine which was blessed by him, and give it to the sick, and they talk of miracles, &c."

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so common; but in other respects they differ widely. None of S. Philip's sermons have been preserved to us; but from his letters, from his natural disposition, and from his whole life, it is easy to infer that Savonarola excelled him in vigour of thought, in richness of imagery, and in oratorical power; while Philip surpassed the Frate in the winning sweetness and exquisite simplicity of his discourses. Savonarola was undoubtedly a far greater orator than our saint. With all his defects, Italy has never produced a more consummate master of sacred eloquence than the soul-stirring Dominican; he may sustain, without being overshadowed, a comparison with Bourdaloue, Fénelon, and Bossuet. If, moreover, we turn to the public exercise of religion, we have only to recall the procession led by Savonarola through the streets on Palm Sunday, the crowds who joined in it (the boys alone numbered eight thousand), the singing of psalms and hymns composed for the occasion by the poet Beninvieni, the emotion and the tears of that immense multitude of people, so that many said that "the glory of Paradise was come down upon earth;" and we see that the visits to the seven churches led by S. Philip are the counterpart of the processions of Savonarola, and in a sense their continuation. The carnival season which was chosen by S. Philip for the visit to the seven churches reminds us of those other processions of Savonarola which were repeated with wonderful results during the carnival. And the effects of these pious processions were in both cases the same—a great renewal of religious fervour, and a higher tone of christian practice. The labours of both produced results not merely surprising but lasting. Thus, for instance, if Savonarola inspired with admiration and enthusiasm the men most distinguished in science

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and most famous in art at the close of the fifteenth century, men like Pico della Mirandola, Poliziano, Lorenzo di Credi, Fra Bartolomeo, Luca della Robbia, Ghirlandajo, and many others; we find that Philip too was tenderly beloved by all the saints of his time, saints such as S. Charles Borromeo and S. Pius V., and numbered among his disciples Baronio, the two brothers Bozio, Palestrina, many learned and holy cardinals, several Popes, and a great number of other men illustrious in science and in art.

Savonarola's work was certainly far more prominent and striking, more animated and dramatic, than S. Philip's; the conflict in which he engaged was fiercer and more passionate, and its success was at first greater and more visible than that of the new apostle of Rome. But, on the other hand, while Philip seemed to be doing much less, and to be almost unconscious that he was doing anything at all, the results of his work were more abundant, more abiding and sure. What contributed most to Philip's success was his incomparable gentleness and suavity of manner; while Savonarola's greatest difficulties lay in his fiery, impetuous character, and his inconsiderate zeal. While Philip expresses in his life the tender and subduing charity of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of men, Savonarola stands forth stern and terrible as a prophet of the Old Testament; he reminds us of the denunciations of Ezechiel or Amos, and his preaching breathes the spirit of the ancient law. Savonarola scourged with bitterness the vices of the time, and urged the need of reformation; while Philip trusted that the divine charity which glowed in his own heart would gradually insinuate itself into the souls of those around him, and thus supplant the spirit of paganism, and re-establish the kingdom of God in

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the world. And thus, while Philip longed for the reformation of the lives of those who held high office in the Church, he never forgot the reverence and submission due to ecclesiastical authority; he knew that, without this reverent submission, attempts at reform could only irritate and aggravate the wounds they were intended to heal. When he was unjustly punished, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, he submitted, and with a patience and humility which of themselves disarmed his opponents. Savonarola, on the other hand, in his great strait, when compelled to choose between obedience to a Pope of ill renown and his ardent longing for reform, could not humble himself and wait, and ruined by his short-sighted zeal the work he strove to accomplish.

I cannot close this comparison of two great men without noting one circumstance more, very important in itself, and full of instruction most necessary in our own times. Philip's reformation succeeded better than Savonarola's, and was more lasting, because he kept it free from all alloy of civil or political reform; he trusted to its immense indirect influence on civilization and government. Savonarola, on the contrary, combined and confused the two reforms, and thus limited and retarded both. It was not altogether his fault; the state of things in Florence was such that he could hardly avoid this combination. Those who look on Savonarola as a teacher of republican theories, such as are held by socialists and others in our days, show that they do not understand his life and his position. In many parts of his writings he teaches clearly that in his ideal of government the first rank and the highest honour are due to monarchy.[1] He cared little, if at

[1] See his sermon for the Saturday after the fifth Sunday in Lent, quoted by Rio: *De l'Art Chrétien*, tome ii. ch. 12.

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all, for forms of civil government; the one paramount condition with him was that all government should be christian, and his great aspiration was that Christ Himself should reign throughout the states of Italy. But because he saw that in Florence the triumph of the Medici was virtually the triumph of the rich, of bankers and usurers, and of that large class whom he calls *tiepidi*, lukewarm or indifferent, the passive opponents of piety, morality, and reform, therefore he advocated for Florence the popular form of government, which was desired by almost all who cared for religion and its purity. This is what made Savonarola so ardent a republican; he deemed himself compelled to combine and almost identify two causes in their very nature distinct, and saw the cause he loved perish in the overthrow of its ally. S. Philip's position was altogether different. There was no dearth of political discussion in Rome, but he kept himself so carefully out of its sphere that we seek in vain throughout his long life for the faintest trace of any interest or influence in affairs of State. Once only, as we shall see, towards the close of his life, he exerted himself to bring about the reconciliation of Henry IV. with the Church; and this he did simply in his loving zeal for the glory of God, and the welfare of religion in France.

On one memorable occasion Philip displayed the great love and veneration with which he regarded Savonarola. It was during the Pontificate of Paul IV., and shortly after the events recorded in the last chapter. His intervention on this occasion is of a kind which the world affects to disdain; but it has an inexpressible beauty of its own, and is, I think, singularly rich in its teaching.

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Pope Paul IV. was naturally stern and imperious, and he had resolved to condemn with the utmost severity all books which gratified the taste for novelty in matters of religion, or treated with disrespect the authority of the Church. It is said that he even suspected the orthodoxy of the Spiritual Exercises of S. Ignatius, and had them examined by Morone and Foscherari, who were both, as we have seen, subsequently imprisoned on suspicion of heresy. He was not likely to treat with indulgence the writings of Savonarola, so fearless and so reckless even in their audacity, with their fierce invectives against bishops and prelates, their loud lamentations over the state of the Church, and their dire threats of woe to men of all ranks and conditions. When he had appointed, for the examination of suspected books, a congregation consisting of all the Cardinals and Generals of religious orders, he directed them to subject the works of Savonarola to the most rigid scrutiny. The interest which S. Philip took in this examination shows us how intense was his yearning for a true and complete reform. He prayed unceasingly and with unwonted fervour, and to his prayer was vouchsafed a miracle which I will retail in some detail, both because it has hitherto been little known, and because it seems to me very full of instruction. And as I have found in a book not very widely known a letter of Fra Vincenzo Ercolani, a contemporary and eye-witness, my account of it will be trustworthy as well as complete.[1] The testimony of Ercolani will have the greater weight with my readers when they know that he was not only an eye-witness

[1] *Vita di Fra Jeronimo Savonarola*, by Bartolomeo Aquarone (Alessandria, 1857). The letter of Ercolani, which is very long, is given in the appendix; the original is in the archives of the Convent of S. Marco in Florence.

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of what he relates, but a most devoted friend of S. Philip, a man in great repute of learning and sanctity; and that after having been Prior of the Minerva, he became Bishop of Sarsina, then of Imola, and lastly of Perugia. And I may add that his statement is in perfect accordance with the discourse pronounced in this cause by another Dominican, Fra Bernardino of Lucca, in presence of the Cardinals of the Inquisition.[1]

The writings of Savonarola were much talked of in Rome; they were eagerly read by the clergy, and, as we have seen, S. Philip possessed them, and used them for the instruction of his spiritual children; but they were very naturally distasteful to many heads of religious communities. One day, when the Pope was sitting in full Consistory, some of those religious, who were members of the Congregation for the examination of suspected books, made charges of the gravest nature against the dreaded writings. The Pope was already ill-disposed towards Savonarola; and as he listened to the extracts from his books as they were read in support of the various charges, he became so angry that he stamped with his feet, and exclaimed: "Why, this is Martin Luther all over; this is most pernicious doctrine. What are you thinking of, Monsignori? what do you want more, Reverendissimi? Prohibit this at once; suppress it without delay! Do you not see how he assails and condemns the Apostolic See?" This outburst of indignation struck those present with awe; all seemed to bow, in silence if not in approval, to the will of the head of the Church expressed with such decision.

[1] This discourse is printed in the appendix (No. xiii.) to the second volume of a work entitled: *Vita R. P. Hieron Savonarola*, auctore Joan. Fr. Pico. Parisiis, 1674.

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But there was in the Consistory a cardinal who was also a saint—Ghislieri, who subsequently became S. Pius V., and in whom the severity and inflexibility of natural character were largely qualified and tempered with Christian charity. And he made reply with perfect self-possession and great gentleness of manner: "Holy Father, we will do our duty, and submit the cause to the learned men of the Congregation, to which your Holiness has committed it." These prudent words somewhat soothed the irritation of the Pope, and he bade them lose no time about it, for that the teaching of Savonarola was scandalous and pernicious. Then began a minute examination of the suspected teaching; it lasted six months, and its vicissitudes were many, for it was complicated and confused by many human passions. The adversaries of the Dominican Frate were so numerous among the cardinals, the theologians, and the religious orders, that it seemed as if, humanly speaking, the cause would be decided at once. The Dominicans, however, exerted themselves with incredible ardour and energy in the defence of their great master. Ercolani especially, and with him Padre Matteo Laghi, a great theologian, spared neither time nor toil in answering every objection. They were harassed and insulted; they knew no rest of soul or body; for six long months they worked on through the night in defence of their own Fra Girolamo; they prepared answers to every charge; they verified every quotation, and against the incriminated extracts from Savonarola they set passages of equal severity of denunciation from the Fathers of the Church. Ercolani says that he looks on it as a miracle that his companion did not die of fatigue, and that they were not both again and again driven in anger from the presence of the cardinals. The storm knew no pause

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or lull. Accusations poured in on the Congregation thick and fast, and the drift of them all was that the doctrine of the Frate should be condemned as heretical. Fragments of his sermons were altered, mutilated, and wrenched from their context, and many extracts were taken as they are given by the untruthful Caterini. The advocates for the defence reinstated the detached fragments in their context, showed that the Fathers of the Church had said the same things, and dwelt much on the ignorance of the accusers. The conflict grew fiercer and hotter day by day. Cardinal Ghislieri appeared to be anxious and in doubt, and took time to decide. Notwithstanding the pressing instances of the Pope he insisted that the examination should be cautious and thorough; for he said that justice and truth should be above all other considerations.

Some of the incidents in this long conflict are very striking. One day Fra Pietro Paolo of Arezzo, Master of the Sacred Palace, rose to defend the teaching of Savonarola; and, indeed, he was the first who ventured to do so. When he had spoken, Cardinal Gaddi rose and said in full congregation: "Father, your office as Master of the Sacred Palace is to defend the Apostolic See, and not to assail it." "My Lord Cardinal," replied Fra d'Arezzo, "my office is to defend the truth against all assailants, and I should hold myself dishonoured were anything contrary to the truth to go forth from this Palace, whither all resort for aid in maintaining the truth." On another occasion, there took place a lively skirmish between Ercolani and the Cardinal Alessandrino, the name by which Cardinal Ghislieri was known, because he was born at Alessandria. Ercolani, whose zeal in the defence of Savonarola was not always restrained by prudence, was trying to excuse the Frate

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for refusing to submit to the sentence of excommunication pronounced against him by the Pope. Amongst other arguments he quoted a letter from S. Bernard to a monk named Adam, as proving that christians are not bound to obey the Pope against the plain dictates of charity; and he tried to apply and extend this principle to the controversy between Savonarola and Alexander VI. But Cardinal Ghislieri saw that this doctrine imperilled the authority given by Christ to His vicar, and rebuked Ercolani with the words: "If S. Bernard says that, we must censure him too, as being inconsistent in his teaching." Ercolani held his peace; but it does not appear that he became more cautious and prudent.

When the Dominicans had succeeded in clearing the substance of Savonarola's doctrine from the charge of heresy, their adversaries pointed to the hideous and appalling picture he had drawn of the Church; he had spoken of it as being utterly corrupted and laid waste, and he had scourged it with fierce invectives and threats of a chastisement to come. It is quite true that Savonarola's words applied, in his intention, only to the faithless and corrupt children of the Church, and to her unworthy prelates; never to the Church itself, which he again and again glorifies as the fair and stainless Bride of Christ. But it is also true that his words were often words of fire; and that at a time when heretics were disparaging and calumniating the Holy Roman Church, they were peculiarly liable to abuse. Hence it became increasingly difficult to parry the thrusts of his adversaries; but his advocates did not shrink from the conflict, and often gained signal and unexpected advantages. But after six months of excited discussion the result was that, while many misconceptions had been cleared

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away, the opponents of Savonarola's doctrine were still so numerous and so powerful, that all hope of saving it from condemnation as heretical seemed lost. And the cause was deemed the more hopeless by reason of the death at this critical moment of d'Arezzo, the Master of the Sacred Palace, the only man perhaps among the defenders of Savonarola in whom immense learning was commended by the authority of high office.

While these things were taking place in the Congregation for the examination of suspected books, Rome was in a state of commotion and suspense, for the writings of Savonarola were in the hands of almost all pious and thoughtful persons. The Dominicans especially, and their many friends, were anxious and depressed; and S. Philip, who often went to the Minerva, and was the intimate friend of Ercolani, of the Prior Diacceti, an excellent man who was afterwards Bishop of Fiesole, and of many other sons of S. Dominic, shared their anxiety, and exerted himself to the utmost to save from condemnation the teaching of Savonarola, which embodied his own lofty ideal of Christian perfection. We cannot discover whether he had recourse to any human means to gain his heart's desire; whether, for instance, he used his influence with Cardinal Ghislieri, who was at that time his intimate friend, and whose authority in the Congregation was so great. It is natural to suppose that he neglected nothing which might uphold a cause he deemed so just, and the success of which would bring such blessings to the Church. For we must ever remember that the triumph of Savonarola was not, in the judgment of S. Philip and many others, in any sense an approval of his disobedience to the Pope, but the triumph of the morality of the Gospel

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over the corruptions of the world and the spirit of paganism.

But however this may be, it is certain that S. Philip and his Dominican friends trusted for victory mainly to prayer. "There were fervent prayers in Rome," says Ercolani, "in the Convent (the Minerva); and not in the Convent only, for pious people generally prayed day and night. All the Dominican sisters were praying without ceasing; in many convents of nuns, such as the Convertite, the Specchio, and others, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed; and it was wonderful to see all Rome so eager in this cause of Fra Girolamo. On all sides were heard words of sympathy with him and his teaching, and as time went on this sympathy warmed into enthusiasm. Every time that the Dominicans came back from the palace with the good tidings that the sentence of condemnation had not been pronounced, a solemn Te Deum was sung." Fra Bernardino of Lucca adds that special prayers were made with this intention *everywhere, and especially in Florence.*[1] And still the prospect grew darker day by day, and on the eve of the sentence the cause of Savonarola seemed more hopeless than ever.

At length the day fixed for the great decision arrived, and Philip was early at the Minerva. The Dominicans exposed the Blessed Sacrament in the interior of the convent; Gianbattista Neri says, in the processes of the saint's canonization, that it was in what was called the *camera del fuoco*, the room in which there was a fire, half-way up the stair-case leading to the dormitory.[2] And there the Dominicans passed the hours in fervent supplication, and with them many of their

[1] See the *Discorso* to which reference has been made before.
[2] *Processi di S. Filippo*, B. 858.

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more intimate friends. On that memorable day Philip was there, and Tarugi, and many of the disciples of our saint; he himself, as was his wont, was kneeling in a remote corner, alone and almost unseen. God, and God alone, knew the urgency of loving desire with which he prayed for a cause he had so much at heart. Suddenly his eyes shone with a strange beauty, flashed out a great light, and were seen gazing fixedly on the consecrated Host; his face glowed with a splendour as of heaven, and his body became motionless and rigid; from superabundance of grace and love Philip was rapt in ecstasy. Fra Angelo Diacceti, the prior, and Fra Felice di Castrofranco, perceiving that some great change had come over Philip, stopped the prayer and hastened to see what was the matter. They found him cold as ice, deprived of all sensibility, motionless, and deaf to every word addressed to him. They were struck with amazement, for they could not understand or account for his state. They took him by the hands, they chafed them, but without effect. They then concluded that he was in a fit of some unusual kind, and carried him apparently more dead than alive into a cell of the novitiate, where he remained for a long time in that state, with the brothers mourning and in dismay around him. Then, as suddenly, he returned from his ecstasy, and exclaimed with a loud distinct voice: "Victory, victory, my dear friends! the Lord has heard our prayer; victory, victory!" The prior and those around him now saw clearly that this was no bodily sickness but an ecstasy, and besought Philip with many prayers to tell him what had happened to him, and what he meant by his cry of victory. Philip remained awhile silent, but finding it impossible to resist the importunity of his friends he said at length: "I have seen Jesus

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Christ visibly present in the consecrated Host, and with His own most sacred hand blessing all of us who were there praying; and I felt an interior certitude that the cause of Fra Girolamo is gained, and that the sentence is in our favour. And so we have been heard, the victory is ours, the Lord has made clear the innocence of His servant; wherefore let us all give thanks to the Lord."[1] Thus he spoke, and at the very moment when he uttered his cry of victory the Congregation gave sentence that the doctrine of Savonarola stood absolved from all suspicion of heresy, and that some parts of his sermons only should be placed on the Index; not that they contained any error, but that by reason of the exceeding severity of their invectives against the vices of the clergy they might be abused. Fra Bernardino of Lucca gives an account of this decision which is worth preserving: "The Cardinals were much perplexed what to say and what to do. On the one hand they candidly confessed that they had no doubt on the case, and that they were perfectly satisfied with all my answers to various objections, and with all I had alleged in defence; and, on the other hand, they wished much to give some little satisfaction to the adversaries. So after much discussion I proposed to them, as it pleased God, this decision: that they should prohibit only the few sermons which are set down in the Index, not indeed as heretical, but rather as being doubtful. They consented to this proposal that the adversaries might not be wholly without satisfaction;

[1] Benedict XIV. says, *De servorum Dei beatificatione*, lib. iii. cap. xxv. 19, that "before tidings could be brought of the victory which had been gained, Philip knew it by revelation of God, and exclaimed: "Come, let us all give thanks to the Most High. The victory is ours, my brethren. Vainly has the adversary striven against Girolamo, and against his teaching. That teaching stands firm and unshaken, approved by the sentence of our most holy Lord and of the Church."

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not that these sermons contain anything erroneous or scandalous, for it is certain that if they had been in Latin they would not have been prohibited at all."[1] The Dominicans and all good people received this decision with great thankfulness and joy; looking at the number and power of their adversaries, they regarded it as a miracle. It was undoubtedly made known to them by an ecstasy and a revelation beyond the sphere of nature. Those who were gathered together to give sentence may have seemed quite free and untrammelled in their decision. There was nothing to indicate any link of connexion between them and the little chapel of the Minerva; few would think that a lowly priest praying there and rapt in ecstasy, could have any influence on their deliberations. The resolution of the Congregation must, in any case, be regarded as both just and prudent; just, because it recognized the true character of a great man, and the glory of a teaching which was, with whatever accidental blemishes, living, mighty, and fruitful; prudent, because it is undeniable that the intemperate zeal of the Frate urged him at times beyond the limits of prudence and propriety, and that his writings might therefore be a scandal and a stumbling-block to the ill-instructed and weak.[2]

This miraculous fact invests with a fresh beauty the figure of our saint. Miracle, prophecy, vision, ecstasy

[1] See the *Discorso* already referred to.

[2] Gallonio and Bacci in their account of this event say only that the Dominicans had the Forty-hours' Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for *an important cause*. That this cause was the examination of the writings of Savonarola is clear from the testimony of many historians, and especially of the witnesses in the process of the saint's canonization cited by Benedict XIV. *De Beatificatione*, lib. iii. cap. xxv. 19. See also the *Additiones* to the Life of Savonarola by Giovan Francesco Pico della Mirandola, *Parisiis*, 1674, tom. ii. p. 615. The *Additiones* were written by one who well knew all that took place in this examination under Paul IV.

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combine to reveal and to glorify his sanctity. If we meditate awhile on it, we gain not only a deeper sense of his perfection, but great light for our own guidance. Although there was, throughout this examination of Savonarola's writings, a gathering together and a conflict of human passions and prejudices, of intellect and learning and skill, yet Philip did not look for the decision of the cause to these mighty human means, but to God alone, and by means of prayer. Others labour and toil, he prays; and a miracle shows that the victory is to be ascribed to prayer. We see, too, that even at that time he judged Savonarola with the discreet wisdom and the due reserve which a deeper study of the history, and more mature reflections on it, have fully justified. On the one hand, it was his ardent desire that the doctrine of Fra Girolamo should be pronounced blameless, and this he obtained by prayer; on the other hand, in accepting the sentence of the Congregation as a victory, he showed that he too condemned his daring disobedience, and the unmortified zeal which too often led him into deplorable excesses of speech. This great fact shows us, not only that Philip cherished a great love for Savonarola, but that he sympathized with and shared that deep longing for a holy and thorough reformation in the Church which was the leading principle of the life of the great Dominican. This alone enables us to understand why, amidst so many saints and servants of God, he chose for special veneration the stern Fra Girolamo, who was not a saint, and whose enemies even amongst good men were many and strong. It was not certainly similarity of natural disposition which knit the soul of S. Philip to that of Savonarola, for never were two men in this respect more strongly contrasted; still less could Philip be attracted by his

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disobedience, and the fierceness of his unchastened zeal. Yet one dominant thought united them; they both felt themselves raised up by God to stem the tide of paganism, and to spread everywhere the kingdom of the Lord.

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CHAPTER VI.

PHILIP'S CARE OF THE SICK—MIRACLES—BARONIO.

SEVEN or eight months after the events recorded in the last chapter, on the 18th August 1559, the aged Paul IV. died, worn out with sorrow and suffering. His death was felt as a relief. His excessive severity, the scandalous conduct of his nephews, his disastrous war, with the losses and increased taxation it entailed, the rigours of the Inquisition, and even his attempts at reformation, had irritated the Romans and rendered him very unpopular. And thus, as soon as it was known that he was dead, his statue on the Capitol was cast down and mutilated, and its head dragged through the streets and thrown into the Tiber. The papal arms, and those of the Carafa family, were everywhere defaced and burned, the office of the Inquisition was sacked and pillaged, its papers destroyed, and its officials maltreated. Even the saintly Cardinal Ghislieri, and the Dominicans of the Minerva, were with great difficulty saved from the fury of the populace. It is not improbable that Philip had something to do with the rescue of the Dominicans, for Ercolani, who was one of the sufferers, writes: "What did Signor Gianbattista Salviati leave undone, whether in the convent or out of it, by night or by day, to soothe the angry people, and ensure our safety!" Now the

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reader will remember that this Salviati was one of Philip's most devoted disciples and friends, having been led on by him to a life of great perfection, and miraculously raised from dangerous sickness. But the saint's biographers, always intent on matters more important, make no mention of this popular outbreak. Resuming now the course of events, we find ourselves at the beginning of the pontificate of Pius IV., who was elected in succession to Paul IV., towards the end of 1559. But we must linger yet a while to glean a few facts in Philip's life which may find place here without breaking the thread of our narrative. Our way lies amidst great and beautiful works of charity, which disclose to us in ever-new aspects and relations the perfection of our saint; and from time to time, like flashes in a still and cloudless sky, high and rare supernatural gifts reveal themselves, enhancing the beauty of his charity, and rendering it more energetic and fruitful. When S. Paul is speaking of these gifts he teaches us that the Holy Spirit gives one to one saint, and another to another, *dividing to every one according as He will.* But in Philip we find them all; and often several of them, such as prophecy, miracle, and ecstasy, are seen blended in some one act. And of all these marvels the most marvellous is, that Philip alone seems unconscious of the supernatural light which invests him; so real and instinctive is his feeling that it is not his own, but all from God. And hence, few saints give us in their lives a conviction so profound that in the supernatural order the creature is of itself nothing, that everything flows to us from God, who is the life of our life. And we must not forget that this lesson is taught us thus impressively by a saint of the sixteenth century, because in that century human reason in the form of

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protestantism rose up in proud rebellion and declared itself all-powerful and self-sufficing.

We have seen how dear the sick were to S. Philip, and with what unwearied and loving care he visited and consoled them; but we have not as yet seen him ministering to the dying, sustaining and brightening within them at that awful moment the hope of Paradise, and strengthening their souls to take their flight to God. This is one of the sublimest works of charity committed to the Catholic priest; a work which demands for its due performance a boundless charity, ever watchful and foreseeing, skilled in expedients, tender and sympathetic. Let us see how Philip understood it.

Persiano Rosa, Philip's confessor, lived with him seven years in S. Girolamo, and came by degrees to venerate him so greatly that he used to call him Saint Philip. Now in 1558 Rosa became seriously ill, and feeling that his end was near, he wished to be prepared for it by his beloved spiritual son. Towards the close of his illness the assaults of the devil increased in violence, and Rosa was greatly disquieted. He raised himself up in bed, made the sign of the cross, turned uneasily from side to side; and his countenance, his eyes, and his restlessness, showed that some great dread was darkening his mind, and agitating his heart. He prayed without ceasing, but even prayer brought him no relief. While this terrible conflict was raging within him Philip arrived, and approached him with his wonted affection and sympathy. As soon as Rosa saw the saint he cried out: "O Saint Philip, pray for me! Look; there, in front of me, is a huge black dog which is trying to rend me. Help me, O thou, my own Philip; pray the Lord for me that that cruel beast may not

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devour me." Philip said nothing, but knelt down at once, and bade all who were present to join with him in prayer. No sooner had he knelt down than the countenance of the dying man grew calm, his eyes lost their look of anguish and terror, and he said: "Thank God; see, the dog which was striving to rend me is going—he is running away—look at him there on the threshold. He is fleeing—he is fleeing." Then Philip rose from his knees and sprinkled him with holy water. He did nothing more; and from that moment Rosa became calm and composed and even joyous, and died the next day, the 1st of April, in perfect peace.

In the same year we find Philip at the bedside of a young man who was dying; here the conflict was more protracted and terrible, and the charity of the saint shone forth more brightly still. In the household of the Cardinal of Montepulciano was a young man of Modena, whose name was Gabriello Tana, an obedient and beloved disciple and penitent of Philip's. He lived a perfectly Christian life, was frequent at confession and communion, chaste and full of charity, and assiduous in visiting the sick in the hospitals. At this time Gabriello fell ill, and Philip knew by revelation that he would die. His heart was wrung with grief, and he strove by every means to prepare him for death. Gabriello was pious and fervent, but he was still in the flower of youth, and clung passionately to life. And, indeed, our nature does shrink instinctively from death, precisely because it feels itself immortal; so that it is hard to accept death at whatever age, at whatever time, and in whatever form, it may please God to send it. However vivid and keen our faith may be, it needs a great grace to make this act of submission, nor can it be ever made without a sense of effort and repugnance.

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Now Tana could not bring himself to accept death; he was tempted to regard it only with fear and abhorrence, and to yield to an inordinate desire to recover. Philip knew this, and said to him with most tender sympathy: "Will you make me a present of your will, my son?" "Yes," answered Gabriello. Then Philip added: "Well, my son, this will of yours which you have given me I will now offer for you to God in the Mass, that if He should call you to Himself you may answer every suggestion of the devil by saying, I have no longer any will of my own; I have given it all to Jesus Christ." Having said these words Philip went to the church of S. Peter in Montorio, the spot on which the holy Apostle was crucified, and offered the Holy Sacrifice for Gabriello, directing those who remained by the sick bed to unite their fervent prayers with his intention. When he had said Mass he came back to the dying man, and found him so changed that all about him were in amazement. He who, only an hour before, could talk of nothing but his recovery, was now repeating over and over again, with earnest affection and many tears, the words: *I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.* He then took a crucifix into his hands, and with his eyes full of tears he tenderly embraced it and kissed it, and exhorted his friends to cast from them all the vanities of this world, and to give their hearts to God alone. "This life," he said with deep emotion, "is become hateful to me, and I long to die that I may go away into Paradise. Up to this moment, O Father Philip, I have prayed with eager importunity for my restoration to health, but now I beg you to obtain from our Lord that I may depart as soon as possible from this miserable life." And in these sentiments he continued for a long time

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to the wonder of all who were present. But Philip began to fear that there might be something excessive and inordinate even in this desire of death, and wished in his prudence to guard against this. And so, when he was about to leave, and Gabriello said to him again: "I long, dear father, to go away into Paradise; pray that my heart's desire be granted me," Philip made answer, "And if it were the will of the Lord that you should bear this sickness for a longer time, would you not, O my son, submit your will to His?" Thereupon Gabriello exclaimed: "Now what is this I hear, O my father? Do you not know that I have told you again and again that I long to go to Paradise to see God, and that I cannot remain in this life? Pray then to the Lord that I may anyhow depart before the fifth hour of the night." "Well, my son," answered Philip, "be of good courage, and doubt not that you will have the desire of your heart; but I warn you to prepare yourself to fight valiantly, because the devil will make many assaults on you. Remember, therefore, that you have given your will to Christ, and fear nothing; for He will overcome for you in every fight." And then, speaking from a divine illumination, he told him one by one the temptations with which he would be assailed.

The saint then took his leave, intrusting the dying man to the care of Tarugi, Gianbattista Salviati, Marmitta, and others of his penitents, charging them not to leave him, and to let him know if any change took place. Not long after the saint had left, the sick man's soul became more disquieted than ever with temptations and assaults of the enemy. And first, a cloud of pride overcast his mind, and he was tempted to presume that he had by his good life acquired such merit before God that he might feel quite secure of his

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salvation. He was soon aware of this temptation and strove to overcome it, imploring those around him to aid him with their prayers, and calling on the Holy Name of Jesus. He had scarcely repelled this temptation when darkness fell again on his soul, and he found himself unable to utter the Holy Name as he wished. This powerlessness agitated and disturbed him exceedingly, so that he cried out: "Help, brothers, help; for I cannot pronounce it. O what terrible temptation is this, that I cannot utter the Name of Jesus!" And so grievously was his mind distracted by this conflict that though he pronounced the sacred Name several times, it seemed to him that he had not done so, and could not do so. So keen was his anguish that his strength visibly failed, and his whole body was covered with perspiration. Thereupon they sent for Philip, and when the dying man saw the saint he became at once quite cheerful, and Philip showed him the crucifix, put into his mouth and into his heart the most holy Name of Jesus, bade him repeat the Creed, and so soothed him into peace.

But ere long the storm broke forth again more violent than before, and a thick darkness of despair gathered around the soul of the dying man. His eyes were glazed with terror; he rolled them in every direction in horror and apprehension; he threw himself restlessly about, and his state inspired dread as well as compassion. He seemed to see before him the devil, with a fierce and terrible aspect; his whole body shook with fear, and he exclaimed: "Alas, alas, wretch that I am! what sins! how many sins! alas! have mercy, O my God; Father Philip, drive away those black dogs that are standing all around me." Then Philip laid his hands affectionately on Gabriello's head, and said, as if

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he were speaking to the devil: "Hast thou force to strive against the grace of God? These hands have this morning touched Christ; wherefore I command thee in His Name to be gone and to leave in peace this creature of God. And thou, Gabriello, my son, be of good cheer and say: *depart from me, all ye that work iniquity*, and fear not; for if you have sinned, Christ has suffered for and paid all your debt; enter thou, my son, into His side, and into His most holy wounds, and fear not; fight on manfully, and thou wilt soon be conqueror." When he had said this he knelt at the foot of the bed and began to pray; and as he prayed a great change came over the dying man, and a great peace rested on him, and on all who were present. Gabriello's countenance became composed and serene, and he exclaimed: "Joy, joy, my brothers; the dogs are going, and Father Philip is driving them away; see how wildly they fly. We have overcome indeed; you are put to flight in spite of yourselves, and now I can freely utter the name of Jesus." And then he fixed his eyes on a crucifix which one of the bystanders held in his hand, and prayed with such fervour that all who were present were moved to tears. At the sound of their weeping he said to them: "O my brothers, what have I seen with these eyes of mine! Now I know in truth what our Father Philip has often told us, that whatever love we give to the creature is so much taken from the Creator; wherefore I beseech you, set all your love on God, and give me now my crucified Lord into my hands." And then he embraced the crucifix, and kissed it again and again with eager affection, saying, "Blessed be Jesus, blessed all the world over, blessed for evermore; who shall ever separate me from His love?" Thus he continued throughout his agony, which was

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blessed and peaceful as that of a saint, until at length, in presence of Philip, and at the moment the saint had foretold, he passed joyously away from this world with the name of Jesus on his lips, leaving on his countenance a beauty as of an angel of Paradise.

I have related this event in much detail, not only because the biographers of the saints have done so, but because I think it very full of comfort to the sick, and of instruction to priests. No part of the priestly ministry is so difficult as the assisting of a dying person with wise and prudent charity; never does a priest feel himself so little, so poor, so powerless in himself, as when discharging his office in presence of the dark mystery of death. And therefore I wish that the example of Philip may be graven more deeply, not only on my own mind and heart, but on those of my readers, most especially if they be priests.

Let us now pass on to other works of charity and other wonders of our saint. Gallonio assigns to this period of Philip's life an event in which charity and miracle are beautifully interwoven. One day the saint was speaking of two of his spiritual children, the one an Italian and the other a Frenchman; the latter was in the household of Cardinal Santafiore, of the former we know no more than that his name was Luigi. The Italian was deemed far more pious and devout than the Frenchman; but Philip said that the Italian would gradually decline in fervour, and end by becoming a worldly person, and that the Frenchman would persevere and make great progress in virtue; and so it came to pass. But this prophetic light did not prevent the saint from working a miracle to save the life of him whose falling away he foresaw. A few days later the Italian told Philip that he wanted to go to Naples,

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but without assigning any motive for his going. Philip feared that the voyage would injure one so weak and unstable in virtue, and entreated him not to go; and when he found him obstinately bent on going, he said to him with an air of severity and even of menace: "Well, go since you will go; but be sure of this, that you will either fall into the hands of the Turks, or run great risk of being drowned." The young man paid no attention to these warning words; he regarded them as spoken merely to frighten him from his purpose, and he embarked for Naples. When the ship got out to sea it was pursued and attacked by the Turks; and in his fright Luigi threw himself into the sea, and, as he could not swim, was on the point of being drowned. In his extremity the warning of Philip recurred to his mind, and he turned his heart towards the saint as though he were in Paradise, and implored him to save him from death. Wonderful to relate, he saw the form of Philip moving like a heavenly vision on the waters; and the saint, taking him by the hair, drew him safely to the shore, and then disappeared. Gallonio refers to the processes of the saint's canonization for the evidence of this miracle, and proceeds to relate several others. Thus, Philip foretold to a penitent of his who was about to enter a religious order that he would not remain in it; and so it came to pass. He assured Gian-Battista Saraceni that he would become a religious; and Saraceni afterwards became a Dominican at the Minerva, took the name of Peter Martyr, and was Vicar-General of the Order. One day Philip looked fixedly at a young man, not eighteen years of age, whom he had never seen before; and although he was dressed as a man of the world, he knew him for a priest by the supernatural splendour which shone over

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his countenance. Another day he sent Tarugi to visit a penitent of his, because he said, "My heart misgives me about her;" and Tarugi reached her in time to prepare her for death and assist her in her agony. We read the same thing of a captain, who was one of the saint's spiritual children. A young Portuguese who was his penitent and apparently very fervent, resolved to become a Dominican. Philip foresaw that he would not persevere, warned him, and gave a reluctant consent; the young man fell away. We can scarcely form to ourselves an idea of the feeling which prevailed in Rome in regard of Philip's extraordinary gifts. It was believed that he read the inmost minds and hearts of his disciples; some declared that he had discovered to them their own secret sins; others found with awe that their most hidden thoughts, their temptations, anxieties, and perils, all were known to him and pointed out to them with perfect clearness and simplicity. And thus all who were about Philip were fully persuaded that he was a great saint; as such they obeyed him, revered him, loved him more and more, and drew closer to him, that they might draw from his perfection life and nourishment for their souls.

About this time Philip wrote the earliest of his few remaining letters, and it is addressed to one of his spiritual children. The letters of a saint are a great treasure; they are touches of a portrait drawn unconsciously by himself, and thus picture him to us better than anything else. It is a great grief to me that no letters of his earlier years have been preserved; let us pause a while on this, the first, which is of singular beauty; and that we may understand it the better, let us cast a glance at the events to which it refers.

We are now in the year 1556. I have already

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spoken of the great war declared against the Spaniards by Paul IV., and of the great advantages, both religious and political, which he had hoped from it. In this year the Duke of Alva, Viceroy of Naples, had entered the Pontifical state and occupied Pontecorvo, Frosinone, Veroli, Alatri, Piperno, and Terracina; Anagni had been given up to pillage, and Valmontone, Palestrina, and Segni had been surrendered. Marcantonio Colonna at the head of eight hundred horsemen was ravaging the country up to the very gates of Rome, and the Spaniards had invested Rocca d'Ostia. The time was near at hand when Henry of France would take part in the war, and send the Duke of Guise to aid the Papal forces. Meanwhile there was war all around Rome, down to the borders of the Abruzzi; and it was with great difficulty that a truce of forty days was obtained in this year, and fruitless efforts made to restore peace.

While Italy was in this state, Philip had, amongst others, a spiritual son named Francesco Vai of Prato, of a noble family which still exists in well-merited honour and esteem. Though Francesco lived generally in Rome, and in constant intercourse with the saint, he happened to be at this time in Prato, where he was detained by apprehensions of an outbreak of hostilities in the City. To Philip it seemed a lesser evil to perish in war as an innocent victim, than to become corrupted by the love of the world and its vain shadows, and to forsake the way of the Lord. He knew that Francesco's character was impulsive and vacillating, and he feared that he might decline in fervour now that he was no longer supported by his usual exercises of devotion and the example of his brethren. And hence he wrote him a letter in which he encouraged him with words of

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tender affection, and gave him spiritual counsels which startle us by their high perfection. As we read this letter we learn, among other things, that Philip's exceeding sweetness and gentleness of disposition were not incompatible with a lofty courage and a generous contempt of life itself in the cause of virtue. While all Italy was in arms, and Rome itself in peril, Philip writes thus to Francesco Vai:—

"Jesus. Maria.

"I do not know whether I ought to call you *dearest*, as is usual at the beginning of letters, considering that because of the war, and your desire of keeping a whole skin, you have the heart to stay away from us all, from father, friends, and brothers. Good sons are wont to assist their father in his need with their substance, their strength, and their life, . . . and there you are, so timid and anxious about yourself, when you ought to give anything for such an occasion of coming to receive, if need be, the crown of martyrdom. One may see from this that you have not as yet made a start, for death is wont to affright those only who are still in their sins, not those who, like S. Paul, habitually desire to die and to be with Christ. . . . Indeed, I may rather say that one of the greatest crosses that can be laid on a person such as I wish you to be is, the not dying for Christ, as perchance you might do if you were to come here. Any one would like to stand on Mount Tabor, and see Christ transfigured; but to go up to Jerusalem and to accompany Christ on Mount Calvary, few are willing. It is in the fire and in tribulations that the true Christian is known. For as to the consolations you had with brother Alessio during your journey, there is no wonder in them if you had been reading, and if you shed a few poor tears, and felt

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somewhat more fervour of spirit than usual; for Christ was drawing you with this gentle call to bear a little of the cross. Spiritual persons generally have sweetness first, and bitterness afterwards; therefore, shake off all lukewarmness, put away unreality, bear the cross, and do not make the cross bear you. Be, moreover, prudent and give no trouble to any one; take care that others rather receive from you than you from them, for a spiritual man should have, only in order to give. If, as you write, you have met with so much humility and so much kindness, learn from this to be yourself humble and kind; and if the friend you praise so highly entertained you for nine days in Florence, because you had entertained him one day in Prato, remember that you are now bound to entertain him eighty-one days in Prato. . . . Commend me to sister Catherine (dei Ricci), and beg her to pray God for me that I may win many souls, and that I may not bury in the earth the talents given me, be they five or ten, three or one. Pray for me, for I am sick in body, and not as I could wish to be in my soul (6 Nov. 1556)."[1]

From this letter we learn that Philip's affectionate friendship with sister Catherine dei Ricci, whom he had never seen, had already begun in 1556.

This year was a memorable one in Philip's life on another account; it was the year in which he won and drew to himself the heart of a young Neapolitan, whose life became thenceforward interwoven with his own, and whose greatness reveals to us the greatness of our saint. His name was Cesare Baronio. He was born

[1] In the fragments quoted from the saint's letters I have allowed myself to make some omissions and a few slight changes in order to render their meaning clearer. The letters are given in the appendix, as they appear in the last edition of the life of S. Philip, printed in Pisa.

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at Sora in 1538, the only son of noble parents; and he was distinguished for the keenness, the vigour, and the breadth of his intellect.[1] In disposition he was bright and cheerful, unselfish, and self-sacrificing. Had he lived in the world he would have been an ardent, enthusiastic, and eloquent man; when he gave himself to God he became not only a saint, but a man of rare and wonderful learning, so much the greater before God that his heart was so truly humble. He began his studies at Veroli; at the age of eighteen he began the study of jurisprudence in Naples, where he was noted for his abstemiousness and his love of books. At the end of a year the war between the Spaniards and the French drove him to Rome, where he applied himself to civil and canon law under Cesare Costa, the most learned man of his day. From that time Rome became the country of his adoption and the source of his inspiration. He tells us himself that he could say of Rome what S. Gregory of Nazianzum said of Athens: "Although Rome may have been harmful to some, to me it was a treasury and a blessedness. It welcomed me when I was wandering without restraint or guide, drew me as a disciple under the yoke of Christ, and was my teacher and mistress in conduct as well as in learning."

His first meeting with S. Philip is like those we read of in the Holy Gospel; it decided the course of his life and made it great. A certain Marco of Sora, a friend of the family of Baronio, introduced the young man to Philip, that under the guidance of our saint he might be kept from the dangerous seductions of a great city.

[1] The family of Baronio is enrolled amongst the Roman nobility, and still survives in Baccio, a district of the diocese of Veroli, near the monastery of Casamari.

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Philip welcomed him with such cordial affection that he won his heart at once, and he returned again and again. Philip heard his confessions, guided him in the ways of God, and treated him as a son; and Baronio grew in piety and virtue, and loved Philip and obeyed him as a father. In the fervour of his soul he would have entered some religious order, or given up his studies in order to live a life of perfection. But Philip well knew the rich resources of such a nature, and resolved to fashion it and mould it to high ends. He made him remain for ten years in the world, applying himself assiduously to his studies; he sent him to the hospitals, employed him in the humblest and lowliest offices, and commanded him, layman as he was, and only twenty years old, to preach in the Oratory.

Although Philip recognized in his sermons the great powers of the young Baronio, he treated him as a boy rather than as a disciple, and Baronio let himself be moulded and formed. The saint taught him to aim at his own simple, unaffected, loving way of preaching; and Baronio learned it so well that, even when he had become a great writer and Cardinal of Holy Church, he never departed from it. His earnest and somewhat stern character, the depth of his convictions, and the vigour of his imagination, led him to select for his sermons the more awful and subduing parts of the message of the Gospel, such as death, and judgment, and the like. Philip listened and said nothing at first; and then gave him an obedience to treat in his discourses one subject only, the history of the Church. Baronio did not know Philip's intention in this command, and made at first some little difficulty about it; but his love and veneration for the saint prevailed, and he obeyed. Having to preach on the history of the

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Church he found himself obliged to study it, and he thus acquired that wealth of learning which made him so useful to Philip, and to the whole Church.

Amidst all these projects and studies Philip never forgot to accustom Baronio to works of charity, and above all others to visiting the sick, and he sent him every day to the hospital of Santo Spirito in Sassia. One Sunday morning Cesare went to confession as usual, and as soon as Philip saw him he said to him: "Go at once to Santo Spirito; I will hear your confession when you come back." Cesare answered that there was no need for going to the hospital at that hour; it was late, the sick people had already eaten, and they wanted nothing. But Philip insisted: "Go, go quickly; do what is commanded you, go without delay." Cesare obeyed, and began to think that Philip must have some good reason for giving him a command so urgent and so unusual. When he reached Santo Spirito he looked round upon the sick, and at length his eye fell on one who was dying; there was a lantern at the head of the bed, as was the custom in those days, with a Crucifix painted on it, and a candle burning in it. The dying man had been brought into the hospital the evening before, after the usual hours for visiting the sick; and thus he had been left without confession and communion. The chaplain, seeing that he was very ill, had given him extreme unction, and he was passing away without absolution and holy Viaticum. Baronio knew nothing of this as he drew near to the dying man, but he felt a tender compassion towards him, and said to himself: who knows whether Philip has not sent me here for the sake of this poor man? Thereupon he spoke to him, encouraged him with tender words to bear his sufferings willingly for

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the love of God, and asked him whether he had received the last sacraments. The poor man who was entering into his agony said no. Baronio ran at once to the chaplain, who was much grieved at this very unusual neglect, and immediately confessed and communicated the dying man, and assisted him until he died in great peace. Baronio then went back to Philip and told him what had happened, whereupon the saint answered: "Now learn to obey me at once and without reply whenever I bid you do anything."

And thus Philip went on, using the veneration and the love of his disciples for the good of souls, and for the gradual reformation of manners in Rome. He was no longer alone in this great work; he had with him a chosen band of men of good will, filled with the spirit of self-sacrifice, who multiplied a hundred fold the harvest of his toils. But from the day on which he drew Baronio to his side, and recognized the nobleness and the beauty of his soul, he resolved to make him one of his chief and most efficient helpers. From that day it would seem that he had fixed upon Tarugi and Baronio as the two main instruments of his work, and the stay and support of his whole life. We shall always find these two great men at Philip's side, not only governed by him, but almost moved by him at his will. Both were men endowed with rare gifts, yet they both receive from Philip the impulse of their whole life and work. Philip uses them with an absolute authority, and he uses each in the line of his special gift. They were men very different in natural character, but alike in their supreme love of God, and in their boundless confidence and trust in Philip, their father and master. Tarugi's character was more tender, affectionate, and inclined to mysticism; the genius of Baronio was

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mightier, and his nature more impetuous. Philip employed the former more especially in the ordinary work of the priesthood, and the latter in works of learning and research; but he insisted that Tarugi should cultivate his mind with great care, and trained him to become a preacher of rare distinction, while he employed Baronio constantly in the sacred ministry. As they became known and singularly esteemed in Rome, we shall see him exercise both of them in those mortifications which may be regarded as almost the master principle in the mystical school of our saint. As Baronio will be, by reason of his genius, his learning, his great renown, more exposed to the peril of self-complacency, so he will be constantly and singularly exercised in mortifications, and employed for long years as cook in the congregation of the Oratory. These are things which the natural man cannot understand; but they are streams from the pure fountain of the divine wisdom, rays of that light which shines forth from the *foolishness of the Cross.*

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CHAPTER VII.

CARDINAL BORROMEO—PHILIP'S ILLNESS—S. JOHN OF THE FLORENTINES—TWO FRIENDS OF PHILIP.

WHEN the cardinals met in conclave in September 1559, they took an oath that whoever of their number became Pope should reassemble the Council; and on Christmas-day their choice fell on Cardinal Angelo dei Medici, who took the name of Pius IV. He was a native of Milan, and in natural character widely different from his predecessor. He was skilled in jurisprudence and the conduct of affairs, the patron and friend of men of letters, liberal and even lavish in almsgiving, and endeared to all for his gentle, affable and kindly demeanour. His pontificate was rendered memorable by the zeal and energy with which he reassembled and succeeded in closing the Council of Trent, and by the sanctity and influence of his nephew, S. Charles Borromeo. When Pius IV. was elected Pope, his nephew, the son of the Count of Arona and a sister of the Pope, was only twenty-two years old, and was living a peaceful and holy life in Milan. On his coming to Rome to offer his respects and congratulations to his uncle, he was, to his great surprise,—for he was as yet only a layman,—made a cardinal of Holy Church, Archbishop of Milan, Secretary of State, and Legate of the Romagna. The Pope loved him tenderly, kept him always at his side, and made him the light,

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the guide, the soul of all his pontificate. The cardinal was certainly young and inexperienced, and on a human estimate unfitted for charges so important; but his virtue, his charity, his genius, and his strong common sense, supplied all deficiencies. He was one of those men whom God sends from time to time into the world as witnesses and types of His own infinite wisdom and goodness; men in whom the rarest gifts of nature are yet surpassed by those of grace. They shine forth on the firmament of the Church as greater lights, and mark its times and seasons.

Such was the saint whom God now gave to Rome; and the holiness of the youthful cardinal, the eagerness he showed for the convocation and the close of the Council of Trent, and for the reform of Christian life in Rome, naturally endeared him to Philip. A cardinal still in the bloom of youth, whose household was so like a lesser Oratory, and who lived amidst the splendours of a court much as Philip himself was living at S. Girolamo, seemed to our saint a singular blessing of God. And thus there sprang up between Philip and Charles a close and tender friendship, the more readily that, as we shall see, Philip was singularly beloved and esteemed by Pius IV. In 1560 Philip was forty-six, and Charles was twenty-two; and this great difference in their age is probably the reason why we so often see S. Charles, in his great humility, treat S. Philip with something like the deference of a disciple. But what S. Charles lacked in age was compensated by his high rank, and the mature vigour of his intellect; and thus these two souls, so beautiful in their holiness, were drawn towards each other with an irresistible attraction, and with a perfect sympathy. There was in both, the same angelic purity, the same simplicity,

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the same nobleness of thought and affection. Were we to seek any points of difference in the character of two saints so alike and so united, it may be that S. Charles, however gentle and loving, was more rigid than S. Philip; and that we find in S. Philip a joyous and almost sportive piety which we do not find in S. Charles. The eyes of both were fixed steadfastly on the kingdom of heaven, and their hearts overflowed with the same inexhaustible charity. Both were employed by God in one great work, the reformation of the Church; S. Charles with his high rank and his influence over the counsels of the Pope, and S. Philip with his recognized sanctity and his supernatural gifts.

The biographers of our saint do not tell us when or how the friendship of these two great saints began, but there are good reasons for conjecturing that it was in the earlier part of the pontificate of Pius IV. It was only during that pontificate that S. Charles lived in Rome, and could hold personal intercourse with Philip; and only personal intercourse could have knit them together in a friendship so close and so affectionate. At that time, too, many of the cardinals knew Philip well, and the Pope held him in great veneration. Still, no record of their meeting during the five years of this pontificate has come down to us, and we find the two saints together for the first time at the death-bed of Pius IV. From that time their relations are readily traced. In the Ambrosian library at Milan, among the unpublished letters of S. Charles, we find two written by him in the first year of the pontificate of S. Pius V., in which he speaks much and in great praise of *Father Philip*.[1]

[1] One of these letters bears the date of March 1566, and is addressed to Carniglia; the other was written to the Cardinal of Vercelli on the 7th April 1566.

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But without anticipating the order of events let us return to our saint, and see what he was doing at this time, when the Pope and the principal representative of his authority were his personal friends. There was no change in his outward life; he held the even tenor of his way, but the way had broadened insensibly. Everything in his life and work expanded, while he strove to efface himself more and more. The chief event of those years was that the Oratory made a very great step in advance, and added to its pious exercises. It grew up as a plant nourished with the gracious dews of heaven, without any obvious intervention of the saint. This was his one desire and aim, that the work should not appear to be his, but the work of God alone.

But we must here interrupt the course of our narrative to speak of a grave illness which befell Philip in 1562, two years after the election of Pius IV. Gallonio says that it was brought on by excessive fatigue in preaching, hearing confessions, visiting the sick, ministering to the dying, and making himself *all things to all men*. Although he was healthy and even robust in constitution, his labours were so continuous and exhausting that he was often ill, and received extreme unction four times. The illness of which we are now speaking began with a severe and constant pain in the right arm, as though it were pierced with some sharp instrument, accompanied with a fever which increased rapidly in violence, and brought his life into danger. He was attended by three physicians, Ippolito Salviani, Stefano Gerasio, and Bartolomeo Eustachio, but neither their affectionate care nor their consummate skill availed to arrest the fever, and they at length regarded the state of the saint as hopeless. Meanwhile his spiritual children were recommending to God with

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fervent prayers and many tears the life so dear to them. They could not tear themselves away from his room, they watched over him and tended him as a beloved father, and looked anxiously to read on his face something which might give them hope. They even longed that the prophetic light of the saint might scatter their gloom, and listened eagerly to hear him say: I shall recover. But Philip held his peace, until, to their unutterable desolation of heart, he asked to make his general confession and receive the last sacraments. But notwithstanding this, and the conviction of the physicians that his case was beyond hope, the saint at length broke silence and said that he should not die that time. He spoke with greater clearness and certainty to Tarugi alone, and, as he foretold, so it came to pass. The fever left him quite suddenly, and the pain disappeared by degrees; his recovery was so unlooked for that all regarded it as miraculous. But however this may be, it is certain that this illness greatly advanced the holiness of our saint, and revealed it to those around him. Never was there seen in him the slightest indication of apprehension or gloom; it was noticed that he was, on the contrary, more joyous and bright than was his wont. Amidst the weariness and pain of his disease there was no impatience or restlessness; he was throughout gentle, humble, and considerate. There were no complaints, or regrets, or entreaties; he submitted himself with most scrupulous obedience to his physicians, as indeed he always commanded his children to do. He was heard to say: "O my Lord, if Thou wantest me, here I am! O my Love, why do I not know Thee even yet? Wretched man that I am, I have never done any good." And then his eyes overflowed with tears, and he sobbed

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aloud. While suffering from the fever he entreated his physicians to let him hear confessions, and he confessed many of his children. During his very long illness he was ceaselessly praying and meditating, or exciting the fervour of those about him with words which revealed a soul inflamed with the love of God and enamoured of His beauty. The Lord raised him up at that time for the sake of the Church and for ours; blessed be His Holy Name! Let us now trace his footsteps after his recovery.

I have already said that in the fifteenth century many Florentines had established themselves in Rome as merchants and as bankers. Although Philip never saw Florence again he loved it tenderly, and therefore saw much of these Florentines, and showed them singular kindness. And indeed, during his life as a layman in Rome he lived in the house of a gentleman of Florence; he began his apostolate by going about the shops and banks, in which there were many Florentines; many of his disciples came from Florence, and one of the dearest amongst them, Tarugi, was a Tuscan. Thus, as was natural, Philip's relations with them were very intimate; they were drawn towards him by their common love of their beautiful city; some of them had known his family; and Philip's ministrations among them had created other and even stronger ties. Now the Florentines in Rome had not forgotten their own S. John, the saint who is associated in the heart of every child of Florence with so many sweet and tender memories. So in Rome, as in other cities, they could not but have their beloved S. John, and they built in his honour the church which still bears the name of *S. Giovanni dei Fiorentini*. Nor was it enough for them to have a stately church, they resolved that the

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worship of God should be solemnized with befitting splendour. In 1519 they obtained from Leo X. the establishment in their S. Giovanni of a brotherhood of ten priests, who were charged with the ceremonies of public worship, the care of souls, preaching and the administration of the sacraments, under the direction of one superior. On the death of the superior in 1562 the Florentines bethought themselves that it was a great and most desirable thing to draw Philip into their church, and have him always in their midst. He was one of themselves, a son of Florence, and they venerated him moreover as a saint. So they sent him a deputation to entreat him, in the name of the city and state of Florence, to accept this office. Philip gave them an unhesitating refusal, alleging the extreme repugnance he felt to the thought of leaving S. Girolamo della Carità. It is probable, too, that he feared that his cherished work of the Oratory might suffer from his leaving that home of so many holy and beloved disciples; but of this he said nothing. He pleaded only his love for the home in which he had lived so many years.

But while the Florentines grieved much at this refusal, they were not disheartened, but resolved to use every means to induce and even to constrain Philip to comply with their request. They chose three of their number, distinguished for their rank and their piety, and all affectionately devoted to Philip, and charged them to do everything in their power to bring the saint to S. Giovanni: their names were Monsignor Cirillo, Commendatore of Santo Spirito, Giovan Battista Altovito, and Pier Antonio Bandini. After many fruitless attempts to prevail on Philip to reconsider their application, they decided to bring

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the matter before the Pope. They laid their reasons accordingly before his Holiness, dwelt much on the great good that a saint like Philip would do if he were superior of their church, and implored the Holy Father to employ his supreme authority to induce him to accede to their request, since all other means had proved ineffectual. Pius IV. was, as we have seen, gracious and affable, and he had a great zeal for the glory of God; and he promised the Florentine deputies that he would gladly do what they asked. He sent at once to Philip to say that it was his will that he should undertake without delay the charge of S. Giovanni, and labour in that vast field for the salvation of souls. The saint had been persistently deaf to entreaty, but he immediately obeyed the command of the Pope; but at his earnest request he was allowed to be superior of S. Giovanni without quitting S. Girolamo and the Oratory he so much loved. And thus Philip contrived to remain still in the shade, without appearing to exercise any authority over the priests of the brotherhood.

The command of the Pope, which seemed at first likely to destroy the Oratory of S. Girolamo, gave it in reality a wider field of action. When the saint was convinced that it was the will of God that he should take charge of S. John of the Florentines, he proceeded to make two branches of his Oratory, one which already existed in S. Girolamo, and the other at S. John's; or rather he harmonized and blended into one the exercises of both. He divided his spiritual family, as if to show that the charity which was the one and only bond of his congregation was strong enough to keep them one body, though they lived in two separate places. And therefore, as soon as he had accepted the charge of S. Giovanni he had three of his spiritual children ordained

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priests; Cesare Baronio, whom we know already; Giovan Francesco Bordino, a Roman and a man of great eloquence, who was afterwards Bishop of Cavaillon, and died Archbishop of Avignon; and Alessandro Fedeli of Ripa Transona, a man of great integrity and purity of life. Not long after he added to these Francesco Maria Tarugi, of whom we have already spoken, and Angelo Velli of Palestrina, a man of truly angelic virtue and purity of conscience, who afterwards succeeded Baronio in the government of the congregation. These five were Philip's representatives at S. John of the Florentines; and he added to them Germanico Fedeli, nephew of Father Fedeli, then a youth of sixteen. He also appointed, to complete the number of ten priests maintained by the Florentines, Giacomo Salorti, and Giovanni Rausico, two excellent priests, the latter of whom he charged with the care of the parish. Thus Philip increased the number of priests who ministered in the church, and though the Florentines were not gratified in their desire to see him always with them at S. Giovanni, they rejoiced in the great good that was done in his name and by his means. And thus the providence of God increased the Oratory by degrees. Without this command of the Pope, Philip would not have gone beyond S. Girolamo, where the community life of those who were destined to be the fathers of the Oratory was as yet but faintly sketched, although they constantly met for religious exercises in common.

The five priests who thus represented the authority of Philip at S. John of the Florentines were men of singular wisdom and virtue, and the saint deemed it expedient that they should form a little community. If any of the priests at S. Girolamo was a disciple of the

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saint, it was deemed enough that he should follow his example in all things. But now that five of his beloved disciples were beginning to live apart from him, he gave them a few simple rules, which they gladly and carefully observed, and thus these first tender shoots were fed with the sap of the parent stem. They all ministered assiduously in the church; their meals were in common, and each served at table in his turn; and for some time they took it in turn, week by week, to cook the dinner of the community. It would seem, indeed, that Philip made Baronio act as cook far more frequently than the others; he was a man of greater genius than they, more learned, and of wider reputation, and therefore the saint exercised him the more in humility. Baronio left written on the chimney-piece the words: *Baronius, coquus perpetuus,* cook in perpetuity; and it is recorded that when illustrious personages came to consult him, they often found him in the kitchen with his apron on, and cheerfully engaged in washing the dishes. Such an employment of such a man may appear to some persons incongruous and even absurd; but those who know the heart of man, and are accustomed to look beneath the form of an action to its spirit and meaning, will see in this humiliation a condition and a source of the greatness of Baronio. It helped him to die to himself, to the world and the world's opinion, and being thus set free from self-love and self-seeking, there was neither bar nor limit to his progress.

Philip prescribed that both at dinner and supper one of the community should read a portion of Holy Scripture, and some spiritual book in the vulgar tongue. This reading lasted for about two-thirds of each meal, and the remainder of the time was employed in

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proposing and resolving some question of moral theology or of Holy Scripture. The first reader in the refectory was the young Germanico Fedeli, and he was in a short time relieved by Ottavio Paravicini, a pupil of Baronio, who came to live with the community, and who was afterwards a cardinal of Holy Church. Thus Philip tried to introduce into the daily life of the fathers the familiar conversations and conferences on matters of religion with which he had begun his own apostolate. Philip moreover received into the house a number of young clerics, who were penitents of his, and a few priests; and these, though not actually forming part of the congregation, observed the same rules as the five fathers, and made great progress in the way of perfection. These were the main rules and customs of the community in S. John of the Florentines; in regard of the service of the Church, Philip directed that, as an exercise of humility and to honour the house of God, all the fathers should take part in sweeping and cleaning it every Saturday. On Sundays and Feasts some of the fathers heard confessions, and others gave Holy Communion to the faithful; they sang the mass, and two of their number, Baronio and Bordino, preached in turn. The memoirs of the time note that at S. Giovanni the fathers began to preach from the pulpit and in a cotta; and they add that Philip allowed this variation from the custom in S. Girolamo, to gratify the Florentines, who made a great point of it, and entreated the saint to sanction it. In order to understand the use of S. Girolamo we must remember that the pulpit and the cotta were in Philip's mind associated with the stilted and pompous sermons which had been in vogue; and that in introducing a style of preaching altogether different—simple, clear, without show of

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learning or eloquence, and intelligible to all, he had spoken familiarly, either sitting or standing, just as if he were holding a conversation with his hearers on matters of religion.

This mode of life, followed at S. John of the Florentines by Baronio, Tarugi, and their companions, seems to me exceedingly beautiful, and worthy of note as reflecting so perfectly the life of their master. While they lived at S. Giovanni their hearts were still in S. Girolamo, and they drew from S. Philip the inspiration of all their plans and desires, as well as the food of their souls' life. Every morning they went to S. Girolamo to confess to Philip; after their dinner they went again to hear the customary sermons, or to preach in their turn; and again in the evening they went a third time for meditation and the exercises of the Oratory. No difficulty was allowed to stand in their way, nor did they during ten long years weary of this kind of life, so monotonous, as it would seem, so difficult and so unusual. Neither cold, nor rain, nor the summer heat of Rome, interrupted the order of this life. On Sundays, when they had sung vespers at S. Giovanni, they went either to the Minerva or the Pantheon, where they knew they would find Philip with some of his disciples. Sometimes there would be as many as three hundred of his spiritual children, sharing the devotions of their father; and Philip would either give them a spiritual conference, or ask questions which were answered by one or other of those present, and thus inflame their hearts with the love of God, while seeming to be doing no more than converse familiarly with them. And thus we see that the life of the fathers of S. Giovanni hung still upon Philip, though they seemed to live apart from him. Philip was always

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with them; in them he began to give substance and form to the idea of the Oratory which he was slowly maturing. At S. John of the Florentines we find the germ of the community life and rules of the congregation of the *Filippini*, and at S. Girolamo the exercises and the meetings for prayer in common which are of its essence. The apparent separation into two houses served only to test and increase the charity of the sons of the new congregation; and when, after an experience of ten years, Philip saw that the fathers of S. Giovanni were one in heart and mind with those of S. Girolamo, he knew that charity would be the sufficing bond of his Institute, and resolved that it should have no other.

The sojourn of these first sons of S. Philip at S. John of the Florentines, and the continually increasing numbers who were wont to assemble at the Minerva or the Pantheon, gave occasion, about this time, to another exercise of piety, of which I shall presently speak at length.

Few saints have ever drawn around them so many friends as S. Philip. All who came near him felt the influence of his winning ways, his exquisite and gentle sympathy, and the rare tenderness of his charity. All his penitents became his friends; so did those who frequented the exercises of the Oratory, and, in greater or less degree, that still larger number who accompanied him in the visits to the seven churches. Many of these passed away from this life as years went on, and to each one of them Philip was as an angel of consolation and of peace at the hour of death. It was about this time that he had the sorrow of losing two of these friends who were especially dear to him. In 1562 Gian Battista Salviati was seized with an illness which was

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soon pronounced to be mortal. As we have seen, he had been, together with his wife, drawn from a worldly life by S. Philip, and he was always in attendance on the saint; he also greatly loved the Dominicans of the Minerva, who were so dear to Philip. In the letter of Ercolani, part of which I have already quoted, we read these words: "Salviati was a man of rare nobleness of soul, and through him God has done, and is still doing, many works of singular and most useful charity." Ercolani was present with our saint at the deathbed of Salviati. We may imagine with what loving tenderness Philip would assist in his last moments the son so dear to him, and who had been his instrument in doing so much good. Gallonio tells us that Salviati received Holy Viaticum with great gladness of heart; and that when he was told that his death was near he showed neither fear nor anxiety, but went on praying peacefully, speaking to the Lord *as a man is wont to speak to his friend.* And then, in the arms of Philip, who never left his side, and aided by his prayers, he placidly breathed out his soul.

Among the penitents and friends of Philip was Jacopo Marmitta, a man of letters, whom the biographers of the saint mention only as having been present at the death of Gabriello Tana. Marmitta was, however, a man held in great esteem by his contemporaries as a poet, and the intimate friend of Monsignor della Casa, to whom he addressed several sonnets, which are given, together with those he received in reply, in one of the pamphlets of Manni already referred to. Manni tells us also that Jacopo Marmitta was an intimate friend as well as a penitent of Philip's. He held the office of secretary to Giovanni Ricci, Cardinal of Montepulciano; for in the sixteenth century we find the most distin-

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guished writers in the households of the cardinals. In 1561 Marmitta, who was only fifty-seven years old, was seized with mortal sickness, and Gallonio relates minutely with what loving care Philip ministered to him. He visited him often, and used every means to induce him to suffer, as a good christian should, according to the will of God. Jacopo had always shrunk sensitively from pain, and his illness was a very painful one. One day, when he was suffering more than usual from fever and the pain attending his disease, he began to complain bitterly, and could find no peace. Philip, who was at his side, was touched with sympathy and compassion, and suggested to him words of trust and resignation, strengthening him to bear his cross with patience after Christ, and then said to him: "Courage, my Jacopo, call God to thine aid and say with me the holy words: *God is our refuge and strength: a helper in all our tribulations;*" and Marmitta, to whom the words of the Psalm were familiar, added immediately: "Yes, *in our tribulations which have found us exceedingly.*" Then the saint saw that Jacopo was suffering acutely, and had not the perfect resignation he wished to see in him, and therefore had recourse to God for him. He said nothing to the dying man, but knelt and prayed with such fervour that Jacopo felt himself cheered and gladdened by a great calm and serenity of soul, and died in perfect peace in Philip's arms. The visitor to S. Girolamo can hardly fail to notice the monument to the memory of this dear friend of our saint, and may read the words which record his piety, his sweet and gentle manners, his modesty, and his prudence.

Neither Gallonio nor Bacci says anything of Philip's sorrow for the loss of two friends so entirely and so

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deservedly beloved, nor is it indeed necessary that they should. From all we have read we know that there was large room in that noble, holy, and loving heart for christian friendship, which, as being mainly supernatural in its origin and motive, is a stream which flows into our love of God. It is, indeed, in part human in its origin, and gifts of nature enter largely into its motive; but the saints do not forget that even these gifts come from God, and that in loving them in their due measure they are still loving God.

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CHAPTER VIII.

S. ONOFRIO—THE YOUNG—THE COUNCIL OF TRENT.

MENTION has been often made in the preceding chapters of the Hospital of Santo Spirito, where Philip for so many years showed the depth and the tenderness of his charity towards the sick. If we pass by the side of this hospital, under the beautiful gate which Sangallo left unfinished, we find at the entrance of the Via Lungara the steep path which leads up the Janiculan hill to S. Onofrio. The church stands on the projecting brow of the hill; and in front of it is a terrace, the view from which is of startling and exquisite beauty. Far away in the distance are the Alban and Sabine hills, and beyond them, on the horizon, mountains white with perpetual snow. All Rome is spread at our feet. The Tiber winding its way through the city and the Campagna, the countless palaces of stately majesty, the hundred cupolas upreared on every side, the obelisks, the ruins of the Capitol, the Castle of S. Angelo, the Pantheon, the giant mass of the Colosseum, and then the long reach of the bare and lone Campagna—all speak to our mind, our heart, and our imagination, a language never to be forgotten. I can never forget my going there for the first time in 1851, just after I had been ordained priest; and the emotion excited in me by that view is fresh in my memory still. Then I entered the church dedicated to S. Onofrio, a hermit

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of Egypt, and adorned with frescoes by Domenichino, representing scenes from the life of the saint; I visited the room of the monastery in which Torquato Tasso lived and died, the garden in which he used to walk, and the oaks beneath the shadow of which he reclined in sadness. But above all else I sought with loving eagerness the spot to which my beloved father, S. Philip, had so often come in the sixteenth century. It is a spot sanctified by his presence, and by the exercises of piety in which he there took part; exercises which will be always had in remembrance, more for what they signified than for what they were in themselves. On the day of my visit these pious exercises were being continued by his sons. It was about sunset, and I remember how, as the dying light threw out into more exquisite relief the thousand beauties of Rome, thoughts of S. Philip and of Tasso held possession of my mind, and profoundly impressed my imagination. I felt the harmony which existed between the poet so full of faith, and the saint so full of poetry; and as I compared and contrasted their lives, I felt that Tasso died a victim of the love of glory and of the creature, while in S. Philip all human and earthly love was absorbed and lost in his love of the Creator. Let us now see what our saint did on the brow of that hill, which to his children will ever be the hill of S. Philip.

We cannot fail to notice that Philip took peculiar pleasure in gathering the faithful in numbers around him, not only in the church but in the open air. In the earliest years of his apostolate we find him speaking of the kingdom of God and exhorting the young to a holy life, in the streets of Rome, or in the porch of some church. Then came the little meetings in his room at S. Girolamo, and then the Oratory he built for

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this very purpose, and the visits to the seven churches. When these gatherings were held in the open air, Philip always blended some kind of recreation and diversion with the sermons and conferences on religion; there were always music and singing, and thus piety was rendered cheerful and attractive. This association of religion with music and gladness was an idea of deep wisdom, and it reveals to us one special feature of Philip's natural character, as well as of his sanctity. I shall have occasion to speak more fully of it in its place, and especially of his delight in music, and the great use he made of it; I mention it now that we may the better understand the meetings at S. Onofrio which Philip began about this time, in addition to the customary visits to the seven churches. S. Onofrio was near at hand; there was only a short steep ascent and then a graceful church and a view of matchless beauty; it was a spot admirably fitted for the purpose of the saint to enlist nature and art in the service of religion. These meetings began immediately after Easter, when the balmy air and the flush of verdure enhanced the loveliness of the scene, and opened the heart to grateful and joyous impressions. There, in the bright afternoons of spring and summer, Philip began to assemble his children, to recreate them with holy and cheerful conversation, and especially with sacred music. First they sang together some devout hymn; then a boy recited a short sermon which he had learned by heart; then they sang again, and listened to exquisite music; then one of the fathers delivered a familiar discourse, which was again followed by music and singing. It was a bright glad feast, in which the thought of God was blended with all that was at once exhilarating and soothing.

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These exercises differed little in their principle from the others introduced by our saint; and, indeed, they were transferred during the winter months to some church a little removed from the crowded city, and formed a part of the evening Oratory. But at S. Onofrio music and singing were more freely introduced, and the whole meeting had more the appearance of festive enjoyment. It was in the open air, and all was so bright and gay that it seemed quite as much a recreation as a work of piety. There are two other points in these meetings at S. Onofrio worthy of especial notice; one is, that we for the first time listen to a boy preaching a sermon; and the other, that contemporary writers tell us, that boys and youths thronged to them in unusual numbers. It seems as if it were the desire and aim of Philip to render piety winning and bright to the young; and this leads us naturally to speak of one of the most instructive parts of the life of our saint, his influence with young men.

Many reasons led Philip to devote himself with especial care to the training of the young. Hearts genial and sympathetic as was his are instinctively drawn towards those who are just entering upon life with such eager anticipations, and such exuberance of energy. But besides this, Philip thought that what good he could do them would yield more abundant fruit, and that the action of divine grace on the hearts of the young has a beauty all its own; and moreover, he thought that the true and lasting reformation of christian life must begin with those who give its character to their time, and mould the generation which is to follow them. And hence he tended and trained them with peculiar care and affection.

And the young felt themselves drawn towards Philip

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by an irresistible force of attraction. His winning ways, the love that beamed in his eyes, the simple dignity of his bearing, all combined to impress them with a loving veneration. They felt they could go near him with confidence; and the charm of his words, the kindliness of his manner, and his gentle charity won their hearts. Besides this, there was one feature in Philip's character which never fails to fascinate the young; he was always mirthful and humorous, even in tribulations and sorrows. His cheerfulness flowed from his good, simple, frank nature; and, like all the Florentines of his time, he was noted for a vein of pleasantry, at once delicate, courteous, and restrained. And Philip sanctified these gifts, as he sanctified all others, to the glory of God and the good of souls. We find him always sprightly, gay, and even veiling his miracles from observation with a gentle jest; I know no other saint who resembles him in this respect. Even in his old age there was about him a fragrance of youth which captivated the young and subjugated them to his influence.

Let us picture to ourselves Philip with a troop of boys around him, ardent and restless in appearance, but in reality docile to the least sign from him. As he looked round on them he seemed himself to grow young again; he had a smile and a pleasant word for each, and he took keen interest in their amusements. He would often lead them with him into the fields, or to some beautiful villa in the neighbourhood, and set them to play at quoits or tennis or some other game; and, although he was a priest and venerable with age, he would make himself a boy with them, and join in their sport. When he saw that the game was well started he would withdraw to a little distance beneath

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the trees to pray and meditate on the Passion, for which purpose he always had with him a little book containing the last chapters of the four gospels. If the boys called him to play with them he would leave his prayer and join them for a time, until he could slip away again and continue his prayer. He would put up with all their childish pranks in order that he might keep them near him; and he even allowed them to shout and make what noise they pleased at the very door of his room. Sometimes the fathers or lay-brothers would interfere and scold them; but they always ran for protection to Philip, who would say: "Let them grumble as much as they like, my dear boys; go on and be as merry as you like; all I want is that you should not sin against God." Here again we see that Philip habitually associated the keeping from sin with merriment; Christian cheerfulness was, as we shall see, a leading principle of his school of piety.

Philip's profound knowledge of the human heart led him to fear more for the young from melancholy and sadness than from merriment. He found no fault with their gaiety, however thoughtless, if only it were not carried to excess; and he always felt a much greater liking for those who were bright and spirited. If he ever saw any one of them gloomy and sad he would comfort him, caress him, and even scold him affectionately, saying: "Why do you look so sad? what is the matter with you? Come here to your father, and tell him all about it." And then he would pat him on the cheek to rouse him up and encourage him. He would leave his meditation or anything else if his boys wanted to have him among them. During the carnival, that he might keep them from all sights and occasions of sin, he made them perform little plays; and, in a word, he spared neither

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time nor trouble to keep his hold of the young. When he was in company with them his pleasantry and mirth contrasted almost strangely with his age and his dignity.

But the object of the saint in this great and startling condescension was evident, and his success marvellously great. The youths who crowded in such numbers around him not only lived good christian lives, but they bore upon them the stamp and impress of their beloved father. They were full of life and mirth, but still they were orderly, devout, and pure, full of faith and of the love of God. They felt no false shame in being pious and humble, gentle and obedient; they shrank with disgust from sin. Such was their loving trust in Philip that they obeyed him instantly and always, and would endure anything rather than give him a moment's uneasiness. And the saint directed his care of them to three great ends. First, he led them to frequent the sacraments; they went to confession very often; less often to communion, because he wished to excite in them a more eager desire to receive our divine Lord, and greater care in their preparation for doing so. The second great end was, that they should be chaste and pure. He knew well the force and tenacity of the habits contracted in youth. The whole life of the young man who keeps his heart unstained will be bright and peaceful; he is clothed in armour which makes him invulnerable in the battle of life. And in regard of this virtue Philip laid down rules which seem at first unduly severe, but which surely commend themselves to those who have sounded the depths of the miseries of the heart of man. He knew that purity of heart is as a mirror which the least breath tarnishes. He insisted on humility, and devotion to our blessed

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Lady, as the best safeguards of purity. Humility withholds us from dangers into which presumption blindly runs, and devotion to our Lady leads us to venerate and love a purity in comparison with which that of holy angels is dim. The last end Philip proposed to himself was to lead the young to shun idleness as they would shun the face of a serpent, and he was very ingenious in finding them something to do. He would set them to play at tennis against the wall of his room, and though he himself was much disturbed by the noise, and Baronio complained of it as unendurable, he would never allow them to be interfered with. When they were tired of play he would set them to sweep out his room, or make his bed, or move a box or a table from one part of the room to another, or weave garlands of flowers for the statue of our Lady, or string rosaries, or read, or write, or do anything rather than settle down into idleness.

If he saw their playfulness degenerate into buffoonery he would stop them with a fatherly admonition; if they allowed some little time to pass without confession he would send for them and receive them with great affection; if any one of them had wandered from the right way he knew no rest until he had brought him back; if he saw that any of them needed peculiar watchfulness and care, he would charge one of his penitents to look after them, and keep them away from evil company. We read in the lives of the saint many instances of the tender and unwearying affection with which he guided the young. A Roman gentleman, a frequent visitor of his, once expressed to him his amazement that he could live with such a noisy troop of boys about him, and Philip answered with sweet simplicity:

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"If only I can keep them from sin they are welcome to chop wood on my back." With such self-sacrificing and exquisite charity Philip treated the young.

We have a beautiful instance of this in what he did for the Dominican novitiate. The Minerva was always to Philip as his own home—all were his friends and brothers; there he often assembled his disciples for religious exercises; there he was wont to pray, to assist at the Divine office, and hear the sermons, especially those of Ercolani, whom he loved for the fervour and unction of his preaching. And on their part the Dominicans, who were of the school of Savonarola and kept their rule with great strictness, loved Philip greatly, often went to see him at S. Girolamo, accompanied him in his walks, and not unfrequently took part in the exercises of the Oratory. The Prior, a man of singular holiness, rejoiced that his novices should attach themselves to the saint, in the hope that they might love and copy his virtues. He would send them to see Philip from time to time, and beg him to take them with him when he went into the country for recreation. It was always a joy to the young novices to go to Philip; and the saint often took them with others of his own penitents to some pleasant spot, or to some villa in the neighbourhood. There he would pass the day with them in cheerful and pious conversation, filling their hearts with a holy gladness; and while they were eating their dinner, he would say: "Eat, my sons, eat away without scruple; it is quite a pleasure and a joy to me to see you eat." And after their simple meal he would gather them around him on the grass, and give them some fervent exhortation on the vocation to the religious state, and the gift of

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perseverance. His biographers tell us that he would often end with the words: "This state is, and I speak from the fulness of my conviction, a true and great blessing of God. This treasure is yours, O my sons; see you guard it well." And then he would lead them back refreshed in mind, and inflamed with a greater love of God, and a more eager desire of perfection.

There is surely a touching beauty and a lesson of exceeding value in this devotion of such a saint as Philip to the young. How the innocent gaiety of those simple feasts contrasts with those pleasures which pierce the conscience with remorse, and wear away all power of thought and feeling! Around us now are men, young still in years, but already worn out and old; old in mind and heart, and often old and decayed in body. Would that the young could learn from Philip that the pleasures of sense only lay life waste, and bring on old age before its time; God alone, the thought and the love of God, can keep the heart ever fresh and young.

But we must now turn to an event of great importance in the history of the Church. In the month of December 1563 the Council of Trent at length brought its labours to a successful close. This council is connected with the life of our saint in many ways which it would be interesting to study; I will speak of two only. The first is, that on the publication of the decrees of Trent there burst forth a renewed energy of religious and christian life in Christendom; and we find the principles of Philip, his whole life and action, in fullest harmony with the reformed and purified discipline introduced by the sacred council. When the Pope confirmed the decrees of the council in Consistory he said: "This day, my brethren, gives us of a truth new

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life, and binds us to amend all that is wrong; since the authority of the council has restored the purity of discipline, and given to the ministers of the sanctuary a holy and exact rule of life. We acknowledge and approve the pious and patient zeal of the fathers of the council in that they have set themselves, with great diligence and much toil, with such moderation and gentleness, to root out all heresy and evil customs. Wherefore it is our will that the decrees of the sacred council be observed, and its discipline carried out." Nor were these only words. During the remainder of the life of Pius IV., and still more during the reign of S. Pius V., his successor, there was a great and manifest reformation and renewal of life throughout the Church, and especially in Rome. And hence the efforts of our saint fell naturally into the course of this great movement, and it is from this time that we find his reputation spread abroad, not only in Rome but throughout Christendom. He is now seen surrounded by prelates and cardinals, and begins to be familiarly known to the Pope. Hence, too, the influence of the Oratory was greatly extended, and it drew the attention of all Rome. There was no outward change in Philip's life, nor in the exercises of the Oratory; but there was around him a brighter light, and a more genial warmth, and his action upon Rome became mightier and more availing. If, again, we look at the scope of the decrees of the council, we cannot fail to see in how many points they harmonize with what we know of the life of our saint. Thus, we have seen how Philip has striven to revive the love of the worship of God by means of the Holy Sacraments. And so when the council had laid down and defined the doctrine of the sacraments, it provided for their administration with due solemnity and splendour,

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and enjoined on bishops and priests the duty of drawing the faithful to the offices of the Church, and to more frequent confession and communion. The obligation laid on all parish priests to explain the Gospel to their people, and to catechize the children of their parish publicly in church, reminds us at once of Philip's simple and almost conversational instructions. The institution of seminaries for the education of the clergy answers exactly to Philip's plans of community life. When he was ordained priest, he went to live in common with other priests at S. Girolamo; when his disciples became priests, he formed them into a community at S. John of the Florentines. The memoirs of the time remark that S. Philip's penitents lived at S. Giovanni just as if they were living in a seminary; and S. Charles, who understood so thoroughly, and carried out so carefully, the decrees of the council, withdrew himself to Milan at its close, and there gathered into his palace a hundred priests of the city with whom he lived in community. All those decrees of the council directed against the abuses which had grown up from the wealth of the clergy and the plurality of benefices, are quite in keeping with the voluntary poverty of Philip and his disciples, and with the modest, humble, and frugal life he enjoined on all with whom he had to do.

And now, if we turn back to the beginning of the sixteenth century we cannot but adore and bless the wise and compassionate providence of God. Then the Church lay prostrate in desolation and misery, saddened by the corrupt lives of her children and the decay of all discipline, and assailed by the rebellious pride of human reason, and by a great heresy. We have not long passed the middle of the century, and all has been changed by the mighty power of God.

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The revival and the reformation of Christendom have been effected, and the instruments employed by God are mainly two. On the one hand, a few men, eminent for holiness and for learning, are gathered together by the Pope into a council, and there, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, they give forth to the Church the grand Canons and Decrees of Trent; and on the other hand, a few saints set themselves to apply and give effect to those decrees, the outline and idea of which they had themselves suggested. Among the Fathers of the Council whose names will be in everlasting honour were men such as Cardinal Morone of Milan, Foscarari of Bologna, the accomplished Cardinal Seripando, the Venetian Cardinal Comendone, Barbaro, Volpi, and Minturno, scholars of the highest order; the learned Dominican Catharino, Flaminio and Vida, whom their contemporaries compared, the one to Catullus, and the other to Virgil; and many others. Among the saints who in part prepared the way for the great reform, and in part carried it out, a leading place must, we think, be given to Philip, humblest and most retiring of men, who began it so simply, and so mightily advanced it in the first city of Christendom, under the shadow of the throne of Peter, in the very centre and heart of the Catholic world.

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CHAPTER IX.

S. PIUS V.—THE ORATORY DENOUNCED—ANNA BORROMEO —LEPANTO—BARONIO'S RECOVERY.

TOWARDS the end of 1565 Pius IV. became seriously ill, and feeling that his end was near, he sent for Philip, whom he venerated greatly, to assist him in his last hours. Philip at once obeyed the summons, and soothed and sustained the dying Pope with his prayers and tears, his words of encouragement and consolation, and all the resources of his boundless charity. Cardinal Charles Borromeo was not then in Rome. Although the Pope wished to keep him always at his side, he had gone to Milan to visit his diocese, and give effect to the decrees of the Council of Trent. He had just reached Firenzuola, whither he had gone with the Princess of Tuscany by command of the Pope, when a courier brought him tidings of the mortal sickness of his uncle. He hastened to Rome, and found Philip in attendance on the Pope, together with two cardinals, Sirleto and Paleotto, both men of great piety and intimately connected with our saint. These four watched over the Pope to the last, and in their arms he breathed out his soul on the 9th December 1565. S. Charles Borromeo was the animating spirit of the new conclave; and it was hailed as the dawn of a brighter day that the choice of a Pope was mainly determined by the influence of one who was regarded as a saint. The cardinals were

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divided between the adherents of the austere Paul IV. and those of the more gentle Pius IV. It would have seemed natural that S. Charles should favour the latter party in the Sacred College; for Pius IV., his uncle, had made him cardinal and his chief counsellor during his pontificate. But he sacrificed every private feeling to the greater good of the Church, and procured the election of Cardinal Alessandrino, the friend of Paul IV. and his reputed disciple and follower. But the Cardinal Alessandrino was in truth the follower of no man; he was a saint whose life was hid with God, beyond the range of human passions and intrigues; and the Church reveres him as S. Pius V. Philip was but a simple priest, and consequently took no part in this election except by his prayers. But as he prayed his soul was filled with a great supernatural light, the veil of time was drawn, and he was enabled to see in the Lord as present, what to the eyes of men was future. One day he raised his eyes to heaven, and his heart bounded with more than its wonted vehemence as he said: "On Monday the Pope will be elected." Among those present was Marcello Ferro, who asked him privately if he also knew who would be Pope; and Philip answered him: "Well, I will not conceal it from you. The Pope will be Cardinal Alessandrino; he will be chosen without fail on Monday evening, although now no one speaks of him, and you, I am sure, have never thought of him."

How gracious and how wonderful is the action of the Lord in the government of His Church! The Council of Trent had provided for the reform of Christendom, but its decrees were as yet only a written document. To embody them and make them real in the life of the Church, in cardinals and bishops, priests and

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people, and above all throughout the city of Rome, was evidently a work of time and toil and patience. S. Charles had begun to show in his diocese of Milan what might be done by a great man who was also a saint; Philip was contributing towards the same end with his example, his teaching, his Oratory, his prophetic gifts, and his miracles. But this was not enough to assure the universal triumph of the great reformation decreed at Trent; it was necessary, or at least very desirable, that the impulse of renewed Catholic life should be given by a saint from the throne of Peter; and our Divine Lord gave His Church such a saint when He was most wanted, and gave him by means of another saint, S. Charles Borromeo, and perhaps, too, in answer to Philip's prayers. The new Pope had all the qualities and endowments necessary for his noble office at such a time. He had the virtues of Paul IV. without his defects, and he was called to govern the Church in better and brighter times. Though Pius V. was, like Paul IV., austere and even severe in natural character, and unbending in his maintenance of the integrity and purity of the faith, he was always kind, amiable, and courteous; and as his one desire was the good of the Church, his pontificate of six years did much to renew its youth and restore its beauty. He prayed so much and with such fervour, he was so humble, he lived with such simplicity and frugality amidst the splendours of the Vatican, he welcomed the poor with such cordial affability, and he loved truth and justice with such passionate ardour, that none could resist his influence. When the Romans heard of his election their first feeling was one of salutary fear; but they soon learned to love him, and when he died they lamented him bitterly.

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There is a peculiar charm in this group of saints, S. Pius V., S. Charles Borromeo, and S. Philip Neri, so closely connected by personal affection, and working together, each in his own sphere, for one common end. In them all we see the same ardent love of God, the same grief for the wounds inflicted by protestantism on the Church, and the same sense of a commission from God to do what in them lay to bring back the vigour and the beauty of the Church, by means of a thorough reformation of its discipline and life. The great lines of this reformation were now clearly marked out by the Council of Trent; and these three great saints were raised up by God to apply to the wounds of the Church the remedies provided by the council, and to sow around them the seed of future reform and progress. Each of them laboured within his own sphere, with the influence and the authority given him by God. And now if we compare the life and the work of these three great lights and true reformers with the life and work of Savonarola, who had proposed to himself the end which they attained, we shall see more clearly what was rash and excessive and defective in the projects of the great Dominican. We shall see that without perfect humility and perfect charity neither good intentions, nor genius, nor even purity of heart, can effect great and lasting reforms in the Church.

Philip had apparently far less influence than S. Pius or S. Charles in giving to cardinals, bishops, and priests, a rule of life befitting their vocation. But we must remember that Philip began his work long before they began theirs, and continued it long after theirs had been ended by death. His influence may be likened to that of the dew, silent, unnoticed, continuous in its fertilizing action. And if we remember the atmosphere

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of prophecy and miracle which surrounded him, we shall come to see how it was, that, without rank or dignity in the Church, or any work which strikes us with its vastness and grandeur, he holds a place so pre-eminent among the apostles and reformers of Rome.

During the pontificate of Pius V. the exercises of the Oratory at S. Girolamo grew in importance, and drew the attention of all Rome. They were more and more frequented by men eminent for their rank, their dignity, and their learning, by priests and religious in great numbers, and even by cardinals, such as Paleotto, Archbishop of Bologna, and S. Charles Borromeo, whenever he was in Rome. Besides these there were often present Cardinals Taverna, Aldobrandini, Cusano, and Sfrondato; and Alessandro dei Medici, then the Tuscan ambassador, and afterwards Pope Leo XI., was assiduous in his attendance. Before the time of Philip the daily preaching of the Word of God was unknown; now there were at S. Girolamo four sermons every day, and each of them drew a large congregation of hearers. As a rule, one of the preachers, Baronio, treated of the history of the Church; another, of the lives of the saints; and the others, of Christian doctrine and practice generally. Sometimes there was, instead of a sermon, a conference in the form of a dialogue between the preacher and the hearers; and on some great occasions the sermon was preached by a boy. The preachers at S. Girolamo were moreover in great renown. Philip himself, Baronio and Tarugi astonished as well as fascinated Rome with the simplicity and beauty of their sermons. The faithful felt the charm of their fresh and real way of preaching the Word of God, and also of the music and singing which Philip had made

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so bright and cheerful. And thus the Oratory drew more and more the attention of all Rome.

Baronio tells us in the first volume of his great Annals of the Church that at that time might be seen in the Oratory a living picture of the simplicity and fervour of the apostolic age; he compares the warm-hearted and unadorned style of preaching adopted there with the preaching of the days of S. Ignatius, S. Polycarp, and S. Irenæus. He says it was the use of the Oratory that a passage should be read from some spiritual book, which was then explained with great care by one of the Fathers, and applied to the hearts and consciences of all the hearers. He speaks also of the other sermons, of the gently flowing eloquence of Philip himself and of Tarugi, and then again expresses his joy and delight at seeing the beautiful gatherings together of Christians in the earliest age of the Church renewed by Father Philip. We may conclude from these words of Baronio that he too was struck with Philip's recurrence to the simplicity and fervour of apostolic times. Giovanni de' Rossi, who came to Rome during the pontificate of Pius V., printed a book which he dedicated to Philip Neri. He had come to examine the churches and the antiquities of the city which he regarded as the Queen of the world, and after having seen all the splendour and glory of Rome as it then was, he writes: "It was to me matter of amazement and of consolation to behold the great concourse of people of every nation, and every rank, who came to hear the Word of God preached with most fervid zeal, and especially by Philip Neri. Many who heard this preaching were converted to God, and many withdrew themselves into monasteries or other religious congregations. In fact, the Oratory of S. Girolamo seemed

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to me, notwithstanding its simplicity and humility, the centre of all the religious life of Rome."

Such was the position of the Oratory when a storm of opposition burst upon it from a most unexpected quarter. Pius V. was, as we have said, most rigid and unbending in maintaining the integrity of the faith, which was, even in Italy, so seriously threatened by the protestant heresy. False doctrines did not show themselves openly, but were covertly insinuated; they were therefore the more dreaded, and sometimes wrongly suspected. Although the Council of Trent had defined with consummate wisdom and precision the doctrines of the Church, and especially that of justification, the protestants and those who secretly sympathized with them strove to draw the canons of the council into a seeming accordance with their vain imaginings, and great care was needed to keep Catholic teaching pure and undefiled. In the earlier stages of the heresy, before the people had begun to discuss points of theology, preachers might speak in the simplicity of their hearts, without anxiously weighing their words. But now the utmost accuracy of expression was required, that ill-instructed Catholics might not confound truth with error. Hence Pius V. was both vigilant and severe in regard of public teaching, of books, and of sermons. Now Philip had some enemies in Rome, as all will have who follow our Divine Lord in doing good; and these enemies practised on the sensitiveness of the Pope to unsoundness of doctrine by bringing grave charges against the sermons at the Oratory. There was in them, they said, a great deal of unseemly levity; examples from history were brought forward which had no foundation in truth; great scandal was given by the palpable ignorance and imprudence with

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which points of doctrine were handled; and this was true also, they said, of the dialogues or conferences which followed the sermons. These charges were at first whispered about with expressions of regret, but care was taken that they should at length reach the ear of the Pope.

Already, in the second year of the pontificate of Pius V., there had been an attempt to injure the Oratory, of which the saint's biographers say no more than that it was made by evil-disposed persons, and that it was a great sorrow to him. A letter of S. Charles to Ormaneto, a copy of which is in the Ambrosian library at Milan, refers thus to this attempt: "Milan, 29th June 1567.—I hear that the christian work which is being done amongst you at S. Geronimo meets with some opposition, and I cannot therefore refrain from saying that I have a very good opinion of those fathers, especially of Messer Filippo; and I am sure that any interference with them would be a great injury and loss to many souls. Wherefore take them under your protection in all that regards the glory of God; do all you can that his Holiness may know the exact truth about them and their doings, before their Christian exercises be interrupted."

Pope Pius V. undoubtedly knew and venerated Philip; he had lived so long in Rome as a cardinal, and was himself so saintly, that the Oratory could not have escaped his observation. He was moreover a Dominican and a friend of S. Charles, and must have known with what affectionate reverence his order regarded Philip. Still, it is quite possible that his sensitive conscience might be somewhat affected by the many charges brought against our saint by persons who affected a great zeal for the purity of the faith

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and the good of the Church. We shall understand the case better if we remember that Philip allowed simple laymen to preach in the Oratory, and that it was not unreasonable or uncharitable to suppose that some of these might err in speaking on difficult and controverted points of theology. The very gentleness and charity of Philip might not unnaturally lead a man of the Pope's natural character to fear that in the simple and familiar preaching of the Oratory sufficient attention was not always paid to precise accuracy in doctrine. It is certain that the Pope felt some suspicion of these sermons, and that he took the measures best fitted to ascertain the truth about them, and at length convinced himself that the charges brought against them were unjust and unwarranted.

He sent for two Dominicans, in repute both for learning and piety, Fra Paolino Bernardini and Fra Franceschi, who was afterwards Bishop of Forlì, and charged them to listen attentively to the sermons at the Oratory, to note accurately any error or imprudence or inexactitude of expression in them, and to report the result of their observations to him. They did as the Pope commanded them, and reported to his Holiness that they had heard many of the sermons at S. Girolamo; that they had not heard one word that savoured of error or imprudence; and that they were, on the contrary, amazed and edified at finding in those sermons a singular piety, a teaching at once full and exact, set forth in words most guarded and unreproachable. The Pope was greatly relieved and rejoiced in heart by this testimony, and his love and veneration for Philip increased from that time. The two Dominicans were so captivated by the fresh and simple style of the sermons of the Oratory, that they continued for

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a long time to go there. And from this time the number of religious, and of men renowned for learning, who frequented the Oratory, increased notably, and amongst those most assiduous in their attendance was F. Franceschino of Ferrara, a Minorite, a holy man, and a most distinguished preacher in his day.

But while it pleased the Lord that these calumnies should increase the authority and influence of the Oratory sermons, He used them also to test and display the patience of Philip. One day, before the Pope's suspicions had been dispelled, it happened that Alessandro dei Medici, then ambassador of Cosmo of Tuscany, had an audience of the Pope on matters connected with his office. The Pope, knowing that Alessandro was very often at the Oratory, opened his heart to him, and told him he understood that in the sermons there preached there were many erroneous and unguarded expressions. He said that, for instance, he had heard with great regret that one day, in speaking of S. Apollonia, who had cast herself into the fire prepared by the heathen for her martyrdom, the preacher had not correctly explained her act. He had not shown that the casting one's self into the fire is always unlawful, even if it be done from the very eagerness of desire for martyrdom; and that it can be approved only when it is quite certain that the person was prompted to do so by an inward impulse of the Holy Ghost. Alessandro was both surprised and grieved at these words of the Pope, but he prudently said nothing, intending to give Philip a hint of what was said, and to advise him to be more cautious in future, if such admonition should be needed. On leaving the Vatican he went to a sermon at the Minerva, and there he fell in with Germanico Fedeli, one of Philip's penitents, who begged him to go

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to see Philip as soon as he could, for that the saint wished much to see him, and could not come to him, as he was confined to his bed by a lameness in his feet. After dinner the ambassador went to S. Girolamo; but before going up to Philip's room, he went as usual into the Oratory to hear the sermons. And there, to his great surprise, he heard Francesco Tarugi preach on the very subject of which the Pope had spoken to him in the morning, and relate the martyrdom of S. Apollonia with all due care and all needful explanation. Alessandro then went up to Philip's room, lost in amazement, and not knowing what to think of this coincidence. When Philip saw him enter he said at once: "Now come, Signor Alessandro, what did the Pope say to you about me this morning?" The ambassador saw at once that Philip could not have known a thing so hidden and secret, otherwise than by revelation from God, and he told Philip all the conversation with the greatest minuteness. He did not fail to mention to many others what he had that day seen, and thus the calumny only increased the veneration felt for Philip and his Oratory.

Although we know in general that there existed from this time a close and affectionate intimacy between Pius V. and Philip, it is to be regretted that few traces of it remain in the records of the time. We are told that the Pope granted to Philip's intercession the pardon of three criminals who had been condemned to the galleys, and that our saint preserved with great reverence a tunic of white satin and a slipper of red velvet which had been worn by Pius V. He would sometimes put on the tunic and wear it in the public street, by way of mortification; the slipper is now preserved in the church of the Oratory at Naples. Philip often took

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it with him to the sick when he visited them; he would bless his penitents with it as with a relic; by means of it he sometimes wrought miracles, and it was a joy to him to ascribe them to the intercession of the holy Pope who had been his friend. It is recorded, too, that the Pope and Philip often walked together in the garden of Montecavallo, and that they once joined in making, of the seeds commonly called Job's tears, a rosary which is now preserved in the Oratory of Ripa Transona.

We shall have occasion, in the sequel, to speak more fully of the loving friendship which sprang up at this time between S. Charles Borromeo and Philip. As soon as the conclave was ended, S. Charles returned to his diocese of Milan, and confided to Philip's care, as his spiritual daughter, his sister Anna, to whom he was tenderly attached, and whom he was now obliged to leave in Rome. According to the custom of the time she had been from her infancy espoused to Fabrizio, son of the Constable Marcantonio Colonna and Felice Orsini his wife.[1] Amidst the wealth and splendour of the great Colonna household Anna attained under Philip's guidance a high and rare perfection, and was most devotedly attached to the saint and to his congregation. To her bitter sorrow she had no children; and Philip, knowing how earnestly the Constable desired to see his race perpetuated, prayed much for her. One day he said to her quite suddenly: "Be of good cheer, Anna; your sorrow will not last long, for you will have two sons;" and when the prophecy was accomplished, the happy mother often said that she

[1] The marriage contract is preserved in the archives of the Colonnas. The dowry of the bride was 40,000 golden crowns, with interest at seven per cent. for a certain number of years.

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owed her sons to the intercession of Father Philip, who was a great saint. This saintly lady was an example of every virtue to the nobility of Rome; and, as was natural, drew more closely still the ties of holy and affectionate friendship which united S. Charles and S. Philip. Thus we find S. Charles writing to his sister in 1571 as follows: "I regard it as a still more precious blessing that you find such great consolation and support in your frequent conversations with Father Philip, and in his direction of your soul. Wherefore I exhort you to persevere in this way of life, and to strengthen within you these beginnings of the spiritual life, by reading such pious books and performing such pious exercises as Father Philip shall from time to time prescribe to you. And I do not doubt that you will thus make great progress in perfection, and that your conscience will be in such peace that you will be always glad and joyful in the Lord." And again in 1572: "I duly received together with your letter the blessed medal you got for me from the hands of Father Philip; it is most dear to me for his reverence's sake and for yours. Pray thank him for this second spiritual treasure bestowed on me, and let me know for my fuller satisfaction what indulgences are attached to it. I am infinitely comforted at hearing that Signor Marcantonio so often attends the sermons and spiritual exercises of S. Geronimo. I feel quite sure that his piety will lead him to take great delight in them, and that his example will induce others to frequent those holy exercises."

This beloved sister of S. Charles was led by degrees to so high a degree of perfection, that our saint had rather to restrain her ardour than to stimulate it. Her exquisite delicacy of conscience and the activity of her imagination predisposed her to scruples, and even under

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Philip's direction she had difficulty in overcoming them. Philip was skilled in the treatment of scruples, and he always spoke to her with unwonted severity when she yielded to them. Even the appearance of harshness must have cost his loving heart a pang; but he knew well, that in the case of scruples, harshness is the truest kindness, and that it alone reaches to the root of the evil. And indeed, severity entered largely into the method of mortifications by which Philip formed and subdued and perfected the souls of his penitents. One day, after Anna had been to confession, she felt herself tormented with some scruple, and came back to the confessional again. Philip then rebuked her in presence of many persons, and abruptly bade her go away, for he would not hear her confession again; and Anna, in her humility, went away without a word. "On another occasion," says the writer of the manuscript life of S. Philip, "I was going with him along the street of the Holy Apostles to the Colonna Palace, and Anna cast herself at his feet to ask his blessing. This he gave her; but in laying his hand on her head he contrived to loosen all her hair, and was rejoiced when he saw that she received this mortification with great peace and cheerfulness."

This holy lady died at Palermo in 1582, revered by all as a saint of unusual perfection. She had never forgotten her beloved confessor. In a letter she wrote to her brother S. Charles, and in which she expresses her last wishes, she tells him she leaves to Father Philip three hundred crowns in token of her exceeding veneration and gratitude. After her death many celebrated her rare virtues; and S. Philip often spoke of her with great commendation, not only to his own disciples but in public. Her death was that of a saint,

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and we cannot refrain from remarking that she was in her last moments absolutely free from all scrupulousness and distrust. We may see in the words of the Jesuit father who assisted her at her death the spirit and influence of S. Philip, who had been her director from her childhood. "When Anna was dying," says F. Fabrizio, "there was nothing about her that did not breathe the most exquisite Christian perfection; but the greater splendour of her holiness was all within. As though she were set free from all the miseries of the body, free too from all the scruples which had much exercised her during life, with most ardent affections towards God, in the full light of the Holy Spirit, not cast down by pain of body, with unutterable gladness of heart, with great humility and distrust of herself, but resting herself trustfully upon God, she went forth to meet the heavenly Bridegroom, and to take her place amongst those who have washed their robes in the Blood of the Lamb." And S. Charles himself writes as follows: "Though such a loss cannot but be somewhat bitter to our hearts, still it behoves us to hush them into acquiescence in the divine will. . . . If we reverently ponder all the circumstances of this death, we shall feel that we have to thank God from our hearts for that He has dealt so graciously in His good pleasure with this His good and faithful handmaid."

About this time Pius V. gave a signal proof of his esteem and veneration for Philip, by selecting for a mission of great importance his most beloved and cherished Tarugi, thus honouring the father in the son. While the pontificate of Pius V. was both glorious and beneficial to the Church, it was to himself embittered by many sorrows. In 1569 an attempt was made on the life of S. Charles Borromeo by a wretched priest of the

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order of the Humiliati, who was irritated by the reforms enforced by the saint; and although the attempt was miraculously frustrated, the Pope felt himself obliged to suppress the Order, and apply its revenues to other pious uses. In the following year the Turks invaded the beautiful island of Cyprus, then in possession of the Venetians; and although the inhabitants made a most valiant defence, they could not resist the overwhelming multitudes of the enemy. Memory shudders to recall the atrocities perpetrated by the conquerors at Nicosia and Famagusta, and throughout the unhappy island. Amongst the booty sent to the Sultan were a thousand maidens, chosen for their beauty; during the voyage one of them, inspired it may be by her good angel to prefer even self-inflicted death to dishonour and the loss of the faith, threw a spark of fire into the powder-magazine, and thus they all perished with the ships in which they had been embarked.

When the holy Pope Pius V. heard of this horrible carnage, and of the woes that had fallen on Cyprus, he fasted and wept, redoubled his penances and prayers, and strove by every means to rouse the princes of Christendom to undertake a holy war against the Turks. To this end he sent as Legate to the courts of Spain, Portugal, and France his own great-nephew, Cardinal Bonelli, who had now taken the title of Cardinal Alessandrino, and he sought to render this legation as weighty and imposing as he could. He sent with the Cardinal several men eminent for their virtue and their learning, such as S. Francis Borgia, then general of the Jesuits, and Hippolito Aldobrandini, auditor of the Rota, afterwards Pope under the title of Clement VIII. And to these he added Tarugi, Philip's most beloved son, who was in great repute of

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learning and holiness. They were directed to do their utmost to induce these three courts to unite with the Venetians against the Turks. It was not simply a question of taking vengeance on the Turks for their hideous cruelties, but of saving Christendom from being overrun by their barbarous hordes. Tarugi had only very recently been ordained priest, by command of the Pope—for in his great humility he had wished to remain always a layman—and Pius V. must have had great confidence in his virtue, and in his commanding and persuasive eloquence, to associate him with the eminent personages who formed this legation. Nor was this confidence misplaced, for Tarugi contributed greatly to the success of this negotiation by the example of his virtues and the wisdom of his counsels. We are told that when they were to pass through a city of France in which there were many heretics, it was the wish of most of their number that the cross should not be borne publicly before the legate; but Tarugi resolutely opposed this counsel as faint-hearted and impolitic, and his entreaties prevailed, to the great edification of all the country round.

This mission had but little success in France and Portugal; but in Spain it overcame all the difficulties felt by Philip II., and ended in the formation of the celebrated league between Spain, the Venetians, and the Pope, and thus led to the glorious victory of Lepanto. We can readily imagine how Philip's heart was stirred and gladdened by this great success of the Christian arms, and the part he took in the fastings and prayers with which Pius V. implored the blessing of God, in the revelation made to the pontiff of the coming victory, in the feast of our Lady of Victory decreed by him in thanksgiving to God, in the triumphant return

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to Rome of the conqueror Marcantonio Colonna, the father-in-law of Anna Borromeo, and the lowly christian demeanour of the great hero while his praises were being proclaimed in the church of the Ara Cœli. We may be sure that he blessed God for the influence exerted by Tarugi on the result of that great day, which laid low for ever the haughty and oppressive Turkish power, and restored throughout Christendom the tarnished honour of the cross. It is to be regretted that we have no record of what Philip did or said when the great news reached Rome. Fourteen years later, when he received, on the anniversary of Lepanto, a letter from his niece Maria Vittoria, he spoke in his reply of the great victory *granted by the grace of God to our fleet against the Turks;* it had remained graven upon his heart.

Five months after this joyful day Philip was threatened with a great sorrow; Cesare Baronio, whom he loved so tenderly, and on whom he counted for so much good service to the Church, was at the point of death. He was then in the vigour of his age, had been recently ordained priest, and his invaluable annals were not as yet begun. His death at that time would have been an irreparable loss to Philip and to the Church. In the month of March 1572, Baronio had a violent attack of fever. The danger increased, and it was said that he could not survive the eleventh day. On that day the fever was at its worst; Baronio lay quite insensible, and the physicians gave up his case as hopeless. He had already received Holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction, and was rapidly sinking into his agony. Philip, who loved him so tenderly, had been praying without ceasing that God would, in His pity, spare Baronio to him; but up to the last his prayers had seemed without effect. And now, when the last ray of

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hope from man was gone, Cesare sank into a peaceful slumber, and had a vision which he himself related on oath in the process of Philip's canonization. He saw in this vision Philip prostrate at the feet of Jesus Christ, who appeared as if just rising from the grave, and with Him was the ever-blessed Virgin Mother. And he heard Philip plead again and again with Jesus, saying: "Give him to me, Lord, give him to me; give me back this my son; I want him!" When Philip had thus for a long time pleaded with Jesus, as Jacob wrestled with the angel, and without success, "I saw him," says Baronio, "turn to the Blessed Virgin, and heard him say in a tone of deep humility: 'Oh, do thou deign to obtain for me this grace from thy Divine Son, the restoration to health of my Cesare!' And she turned to Jesus with a look of unutterable compassion and gentleness, and entreated Him; and then, for His mother's sake and for Philip's, He restored me to health." Cesare awoke, refreshed by his sleep and cheered by the vision which had been vouchsafed him, and in a very short time recovered his wonted health and strength. The physicians were amazed, and attributed his recovery to Philip's prayers. The day on which occurred this miraculous healing of Baronio was a great day for the Church, for Philip, and for us; it surely behoves us all to bear it in thankful remembrance.

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CHAPTER X.

THE NEW ORATORY—MIRACLES—FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES—PHILIP'S SPIRITUAL DAUGHTERS.

How unsearchable is the wisdom of God, and how impenetrable the counsels of His providence! At the very moment when the guidance of the holy Pontiff Pius V. seemed most needed by the Church, it was withdrawn. His pontificate lasted for six years only, and on the 1st of May 1572 he fell placidly asleep in the Lord, worn out by toils, by abstinences, and by the sorrows and anxieties of his supreme charge. The power of the keys then passed into the hands of Cardinal Buoncompagno of Bologna, of the creation of Pius IV. The new Pope took the name of Gregory XIII.; and, although in many respects unequal to his predecessor, he was still eminent for his learning, his kindness, his love of peace, and above all for the zeal with which he strove to carry into effect the decrees of the Council of Trent. Muratori does not hesitate to speak of him, and rightly, as one of the most distinguished of the chief Pastors of the Church of God; and, as we shall see, Philip loved him much, and was much loved by him in return. When on the death of Pius V. Marcello Ferro asked Philip who would be Pope, the saint asked with a smile: "Well, what do they say about it in Rome?"—And on the answer of Marcello that it was generally thought that the choice of the

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conclave would fall on Cardinal Morone, Philip said at once: "No, no; Cardinal Morone will not be the new Pope; it will be Cardinal Buoncompagno."

The pontificate of Gregory XIII. in its relations with S. Philip falls naturally into two divisions; the first, from 1572 to 1575, belongs to this part of our saint's life, while he was a simple priest; the second reaches from the formal approval of the new Congregation of the Oratory to 1584, when Philip comes before us as its Father and Founder. And as the Oratory is the very centre and heart of all S. Philip's life, we will now pause to look at it as it appeared in the former of these periods, and, indeed, in the last year of the pontificate of S. Pius V. During these four years it was moving steadily onwards to its transformation into a recognized congregation, with its own distinctive character and aims, such as we see it now. On the one hand, it was enriched with many sons, who formed a family of priests remarkable for their number and their virtues; and on the other, the two separate parts of the great work, the community life of S. John of the Florentines, and the meetings of the Oratory at S. Girolamo, were drawn together into one common home. We trace the working of that gentle irresistible attraction which brought together the two parts of the spiritual edifice, and made it faultless and one.

The good seed of Philip's preaching and example yielded a harvest of souls ever more abundant; his followers and disciples increased daily, and it was a wonder that one man could draw around himself and bind into one body so many persons, so various in natural character and social position. But while the Oratory was frequented by cardinals and princes, by priests and religious, by the common people and by men of

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other lands, there were many to whom its exercises were not enough, and who yearned to live with Philip, and as Philip lived. They sought to be branches of that vine which was gladdening, by its exuberance and perfection of fruit, the chosen vineyard of the Lord. In his humility and modesty Philip for some time refused their request, but was constrained at length to yield. And thus he found himself surrounded, almost against his will, with a family which became day by day more numerous. This family required its rules, and thus really formed a congregation; but still Philip would not yet give it the solid foundation and the form of a new Institute. This was brought about naturally and by the force of circumstances.

Many years before, in 1566, a disciple of Philip's, Francesco Soto, from Langa in the diocese of Osma in Spain, had been added to the priests of S. John of the Florentines. In 1571 Philip admitted into his family, at their urgent request, four more of his disciples, and sent them to live in the community at S. Giovanni. They were young, of different nations, but filled with the same spirit. When Philip had sufficiently tested them he had them ordained, and employed them in preaching and in the other exercises of the Oratory and of the church of the Florentines. The names of these earlier disciples of our saint are dear to us, not only because of their personal relations with him, but because they are still in benediction in Rome and elsewhere. One of them was Antonio Sala of Bologna; another, from S. Severino in the Marshes of Ancona, was Antonio Talpa; there was a Frenchman, whose name was Nicolò Gigli; and the fourth was Tommaso Bozio, a native of Gubbio. Philip was not mistaken in receiving them while still so young into his spiritual

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family; their lives were so holy and their zeal so ardent, they reflected so perfectly the virtues of their father, that they were worthy to live with men like Baronio and Tarugi, and others of the community of S. Girolamo.

I shall have occasion to speak much of Talpa, whose name is especially dear to me as the founder of the Oratory in Naples. Bozio was a man of singular genius and great learning; an able and indefatigable writer, and quite worthy to be named together with Baronio and Tarugi. These three great men represented the literary activity and glory of Philip's new congregation, and helped him to make it, as he wished it to be, a full and complete exhibition to the Church of a true priestly life. Philip had urged Baronio to study and research, and Tarugi, who, though not an author, was a man of rare ability and refined culture, to preaching. He soon recognized the strong keen intellect of Bozio, took on himself the charge of his support when his father cast him off in anger, and treated him with affectionate tenderness. He allowed him at first to sell his books that he might give himself without reserve to God; and when he saw that he was matured in humility and the love of God, he commanded him to resume his studies. Bozio, Philip said, "will be able to defend Holy Church with his learning and his genius." But as he would have genius and learning grounded in humility, he trained Bozio in mortifications with an especial care. When he saw him in great repute for erudition he made him teach a few boys the elements of grammar, for a poor and unimportant stipend. One day when he heard that Cardinal Farnese was clothing a number of poor men in brown, that they might stand round the catafalque at an

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Anniversary Mass for his uncle Pope Paul III., he sent Bozio to ask for one of these brown garments, and to assist at the mass with the other poor. And thus we see how greatly Philip valued learning in priests and in his own congregation, and what care he took that learning should be clothed with humility and charity. He knew well that the knowledge which feeds pride and self-love is but darkness and a curse, while that alone which lives in humility and the love of God is peace and light and blessing.

At this time the Oratory made another important step towards the perfection of its form. Up to the year 1574 the community of S. John of the Florentines had no Oratory of their own; and thus Philip's disciples went regularly, as we have seen, to the daily exercises at S. Girolamo. And then, in their great love for S. Philip, the Florentines built at S. Giovanni a large and beautiful Oratory which they gave to the saint, earnestly entreating him to transfer the exercises thither from S. Girolamo. This was done on the Thursday in Easter week, 15th April 1574, and the usual sermons and other exercises began in the new Oratory at S. Giovanni. In that same year two other fathers were added to the Congregation, Fabrizio Mezzabarba, the son of a senator of Milan, and Pompeo Pateri of Pavia, who was admitted on the 24th December. It even seemed as if Philip himself were about to take up his abode at S. Giovanni, and thus content the longing of his sons to have him amongst them; but, influenced either by the affection which bound him to the fathers of S. Girolamo, with whom he had lived for twenty years, and the spot where God had bestowed on him so many grand blessings, or by a resolve to avoid seeming to be the head and superior of the new congregation

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which had been gradually forming in S. Giovanni, he refused to leave S. Girolamo. He may have wished to inure his beloved sons to live without the stay and support of his constant presence; in any case, he would not leave his humble *nido* at S. Girolamo. He persistently put aside the entreaties of his disciples and of the Florentines; and, as we shall see, it required an express command from the Pope to tear him from S. Girolamo, when the congregation had been finally established in the Vallicella.

And now that I have reached this point in the pleasant way I am going, I must pause awhile and look back on the years that have passed. In order that I might not interrupt the course of my narration I have not mentioned several facts in the life of our saint from the accession of Pius IV. in 1560. They are all prophecies, visions, or miracles, disclosing to us his wonderful supernatural powers, and making his life still more glorious and more beautiful. We meet with these supernatural gifts and acts year by year, at every step of the way of the saint; and were it not that it pertains to God alone to work wonders it would seem that miracles had become the habit of Philip's life. As we see in the natural order of things that some lands are gifted with a pre-eminent and exceptional fertility, and that some men are enriched beyond their fellows with gifts of genius, of intellect, or of imagination, so in the supernatural order we meet with men whose life is all hung around with miracles. Whether it be that it pleased God to reward the unreserved and boundless love of Philip's heart by giving him power over the visible frame of things, or that He deemed such array of miracles necessary for the confirmation of his extraordinary mission, so it is that there are

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few saints of whom miracles so many, so splendid, so well attested, are recorded. Gallonio gives us many of these with great detail of place and time, together with the testimony on oath which confirmed them during the process of the saint's canonization; and in this brief summary I will follow his guidance.

In 1560 Raffaele Lupi, a Roman, was converted from a life of sin by finding that Philip could read all his most hidden thoughts, and he became a Franciscan friar. In the year following Philip released a dying penitent of his from the power and possession of the devil, and made his death as peaceful and blessed as that of a saint. That same year he prayed at the bedside of a lady who was dying in her confinement, and in an instant she revived, was safely delivered, and restored to perfect health. In 1562 he read the secret thoughts of Giovan Tommaso Arena of Catanzaro, who had come to S. Girolamo to turn into ridicule the holy exercises of the Oratory, and made him a Dominican in the Minerva. In that same year he laid his hand on the head of one of his penitents, Maurizio Anerio, who was at the point of death, and healed and restored him by his touch. We read also of his curing by miracle in 1563 Bradamante Pacelli of Narni, a lady of very great virtue, and one of his penitents; and of a dying person in the hospital of S. Spirito, who suddenly recovered the power of speech to make his confession to Philip, the saint having said to Tarugi as they were passing the hospital: "Francesco, let us go in here; I feel in my heart a call from God." And many such things are recorded as having taken place during the pontificate of Pius IV.

In the first year of Pius V. Philip miraculously healed Pietro Vittrici of Parma, who was lying at the

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point of death, by praying for him and laying his hand on his head. That same year we find him assisting with the utmost affection and tenderness one of his spiritual children, Antonio Fucci, a physician, who was dying; and although he wrought no miracle, it is very striking to see how he prepared him for death, and how he put to flight the diabolical illusions which tormented the dying man. Of this same Fucci we are told that the saint had freed him by his prayers from certain temptations which assailed his fancy, and given him prudent and efficacious counsels in regard of holy purity. In 1567 Philip restored a boy from a very serious illness by simply laying his hand on his head and saying: "You will not have any more sickness or pain; only be good, and always good." It was also in that year, at Christmas, that Jesus vouchsafed to appear to Philip in the form of a child, filling his heart to overflowing with an ineffable sweetness.

We read of many miracles wrought by Philip during the remaining years of the pontificate of Pius V. Lorenzo Cristiani, a beneficed clerk of S. Peter's, who was so ill of fever that he had received the last sacraments, was healed at once by Philip's laying his hand on his head and calling him by his name; and the same thing happened to a young man, who was healed by Philip's saying to him: "Ambrogio, get up at once." On the other hand, although Costanzo Tassone, another of his penitents, was in perfect health, and had just arrived from Milan in obedience to the summons of Pius V., Philip foresaw that he would die within a few days. Giovanni Angelo Crivelli, whom he loved exceedingly, went to confession on Holy Thursday in perfect health. Philip looked at him affectionately, and earnestly said to him: "My Angelo, prepare yourself

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well, for God wants something of you," and ended by telling him that he would die at Easter. That same evening Crivelli fell ill, and on the fourth day he died; and Philip said that he had gone to Paradise. And although he was very reluctant to exorcise persons who were believed to be possessed, he delivered from the power of the devil a noble lady of Aversa whose name was Catherine, and many others.

During the first three years of the reign of Gregory XIII. many of Philip's miracles are recorded by his biographers. He reads the most hidden sins of the young Muzio; he heals miraculously a priest who was ill, and restores to health the noble lady Costanza Draghi dei Crescenzi, who was at the point of death. To Altoviti the physician, who was thought to be dying, he sent Tarugi with the assurance that he would not die. He foretold to Lavinia de' Rustici, wife of Fabrizio dei Massimi, that she would have a son; and to Agnesina Colonna, a noble lady of rare piety, who was dangerously ill, that she would recover. From these, and many other similar acts mentioned in detail by Gallonio and Bacci, it came to be believed throughout Rome that Philip saw things to come as though they were present, and that the prophetic light was the abiding habit of his soul.

When we read of these miracles, of the simplicity with which they were wrought and the effects which followed them, our thoughts go back to the Holy Land, to Him who went about doing good and healing all manner of sickness, and our souls praise and bless Him for granting so great power to His servants on earth. If we examine them with care we find that the far greater number are works of healing; that is, corporal works of charity, the removing or relieving the greatest

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of bodily evils. But in the hands of our saint they were only the means to a far higher charity, the bestowal on the soul of spiritual health and beauty, of virtues and graces, of truth and perfection. And hence, in order to feel all their beauty, we must look at them in this light, as we look on those wrought by our Divine Lord. Every miracle of our saint falls in with the whole scope and action of his apostolate, and is connected with a thousand unrecorded acts of Christian charity.

Many facts in Philip's life reveal to us this blending of miracles with the ordinary action of an ardent and unwearying charity. Thus it happened that Antonio Fantini, one of his penitents, brooded over a wrong that had been done him, until his heart was filled with hatred, and he resolved to take the life of him whom he regarded as his enemy. Mercifully for him, he was drawn by the grace of God to go and tell Philip his temptation. The saint listened to him without giving any sign of wonder or surprise, and then he laid his hand on Antonio's head, and said with his usual smile: "Get away with you; there is nothing in it." And from that moment Antonio was filled with great peace, nor did he ever again feel the slightest dislike of the person who had wronged him.

But Philip found greater difficulty in overcoming this same passion of hatred in the case of another person, whose name is not mentioned. His hatred was so deadly and persistent, and he was so resolutely bent on taking revenge, that it seemed as if nothing could touch him. He had indeed begun to confess to Philip, but for some time without apparent result. One day, when Philip saw that he was more than usually infuriated with this passion, he resolved to subdue it at

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all costs, and he succeeded. He had always treated his penitent with a sweet and patient gentleness, but now he held before the obstinate sinner a crucifix, and said: "Now, think for a moment how much blood Jesus Christ has shed for you, and what torments He has endured. And He not only forgave those who persecuted Him and slew Him, but in His boundless love He prayed for them to His Father. Now, think; if you do not forgive in this same way, God will never forgive you your trespasses. Nay, if you do not forgive those who have wronged you, you are gathering upon your head a black tempest of wrath; you are despising that very goodness of God which is bearing with you, awaiting your return, calling you to repentance. Remember what you ask every day when you say the *Our Father*. You say: *forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us;* and on your lips this means: Send me away into everlasting fire; forgive me not, for I will not forgive those who have offended me." Having said these words with great emotion, he bade his obdurate penitent draw near and kneel before the crucifix, and say this prayer: "O my Lord, although Thou art stretched upon Thy cross, and Thy hands and Thy feet are pierced with the nails, and Thy heart riven with the lance; although Thou, my Lord, hast shed all Thy precious blood for me, yet all this is not enough for my salvation. Thou must let me pierce Thy sacred heart once again, and shed Thy precious blood anew, for all Thou hast shed is not enough for me." These words, uttered in a tone of burning and withal imperious charity, shook the soul of the obstinate sinner, and he cast himself at the foot of the crucifix, unable to speak a single word, and trembling as a reed with the intensity of the conflict

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within his soul. And then at last he turned to Philip with a look of sorrow and compunction and avowed himself subdued; he felt the superhuman beauty of the precept of Jesus, *Love your enemies*, and ran at once to bestow on his adversary his perfect forgiveness.

A short letter, written by Philip at the beginning of the pontificate of Gregory XIII. to a lady, a penitent of his, whom he calls his first-born daughter, leads us naturally to consider our saint in another aspect of his life. We read in the Gospels that many holy women followed Jesus in the way, listening to His gracious words, and ministering to Him of their substance; and so we find around Philip a group of noble Roman matrons and maidens, who carry our thoughts back to the times of S. Jerome. Then were gathered around that great saint, and nurtured by him in solid self-denying piety, such women as S. Paula, Marcella, and Eustochium; and now, on that same spot, we find around Philip a Salviati, a Borromeo, a Lavinia dei Massimi, Constanza Draghi dei Crescenzi, and a crowd of other Roman ladies, who became under his direction examples of virtue to the aristocracy of the eternal city. Philip impressed on them all the image of his own sanctity, and we cannot refrain from noticing his demeanour towards them, so simple and frank, always most courteous, but always most reserved. His biographers tell us that he was, especially in his earlier years, severe and almost repellent with women; but many recorded facts of his life and the tone of his letters show us that his severity itself was gentle and courteous. In his intercourse with them, his kindly and loving nature put on that heavenly dignity which comes always from the fulness of the love of God. If we compare the Roman ladies whom he guided in the ways

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of perfection with those of the times of S. Jerome, we find that their piety was in outward appearance less robust and vigorous, but that they gave themselves more fully to the outward and corporal works of mercy, and that they were the germ and the pattern of that noble succession of Roman women who have never failed in their great mission of charity. Philip employed them much in a hospital for women, called della Consolazione, and in the orphanage on the Piazza Capranica. He taught them to feel as mothers towards these orphans, to visit them often, to wash them, to make their beds, and to watch over them with affectionate care; and if he noticed in any one a repugnance to any kind of service to the poor or the orphans, he at once availed himself of it in order to exercise her in self-mortification.

We may see the great charity of Philip in the way in which he repressed certain little vanities. At first he tolerated them patiently, saying that we must put up with them in women, just as we are obliged to put up with our own personal defects. If he saw that some ladies took too much care in adorning and beautifying themselves, he did not at once reprove them, nor treat it as a great fault, if there was nothing opposed to Christian modesty in their dress. He used to say that if he could only shed into their hearts a little warmer love of God, the vanities would drop off of themselves, and they might even err by excess in the contrary direction. A lady once asked him if there were any sin in wearing the high-heeled shoes then in fashion, and it was evident that a secret womanly vanity made her wish to wear them; Philip answered her almost playfully: "Only take good care, Signora, that you don't fall."

Among the holy women who were more or less under

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Philip's direction it would be natural to give the first place to S. Catherine dei Ricci, but I reserve her for fuller notice hereafter. I will here add only the names of Sister Ursula Benincasa of Naples, Sister Francesca del Serone, Martha of Spoleto, Catherine Palazzi, who founded the Dominican convent at Marlupo, and Fiora Tregui or Ragni, of Naples, to whom Philip wrote in 1572 the letter to which I have alluded. Of all these, and of other holy women, we shall have more or less occasion to speak; I mention them now that we may see more clearly the results of Philip's work as a whole.

Philip's letter is addressed to Fiora Ragni, but Manni assures us that some copyist has made a mistake in the name, and that we should read Fiora Tregui. Now one of Philip's sisters was married to a Tregui, and we may not unnaturally conjecture that this Fiora was thus connected with the family of our saint, and that though she was a Tuscan she might be living in Naples, as many Florentines did. To her Philip writes as follows: "Although I never write to any one, I cannot fail towards her who is to me as my first-born daughter, my dear Madonna Fiora. I greatly desire that she should flower, and that after the flower she may produce good fruit, fruit of humility, fruit of patience, fruit of all virtues, and that she may be the home and resting-place of the Holy Spirit, as usually comes to pass with those who communicate often. And if this were not so I would not have you for a daughter; or if a daughter, then a daughter who does not please me, and against whom I should have to appear in the day of judgment. God grant this may not be; may He make you a flower producing much fruit, as I have said, and all on fire, that your poor father who is dying

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of cold may be able to warm himself." This letter is written in the style of the latter half of the sixteenth century, but it breathes all the delicacy of thought and the wonted tenderness of our saint; and it shows us what was his humility that he, so filled for long years with the love of God, should wish to warm his cold heart at the fire of charity burning in the heart of one of his spiritual children.

And now that we have reached the third year of the pontificate of Gregory XIII., when Philip founded the Congregation of the Oratory, we might fitly end the second book of his life; but before doing so I must speak of the great and increasing number of disciples we now see gathered around him. They are not only his penitents, but his true disciples. He was in truth a master, and he had formed a school; and of this school I would now speak more fully. I shall thus cast back a clearer light on what has been already said, and give fuller significance to what remains to say. In Philip's school we shall trace out the individual character of his own perfection, a perfection which was the work of grace, acting in completest harmony with nature. Our investigation will be both useful and delightful. These deep and constant harmonies of the natural and the supernatural will help us to love, with one and the same love, God our Creator and God our Redeemer, His works in nature and His works of grace, what there is of good in our earthly life, and the far-surpassing good of the life that is heavenly. In the balanced harmony and due subordination of them lies that Christian perfection towards which they must tend who would live in this world after the pattern of Jesus Christ.

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CHAPTER XI.

S. PHILIP'S SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

It may seem at first sight inexact to speak of S. Philip as a master and teacher of Christian perfection, with a numerous following of disciples; for we nowhere read that he ever taught formally and methodically, nor has he left any writings behind him. But we must not forget that a man's life, if it be noble and rich in high examples, is of itself a teaching and a school; and especially so, if there be many who strive to reproduce his virtues in themselves, and to commend them to others. And the priest who has acquired great influence, and is always preaching, confessing, admonishing, counselling, and speaking on spiritual matters, may gather around him a true and definite school of Christian perfection, without formal or scholastic teaching. Now this is precisely what S. Philip did. If we study his life, and see how he directed consciences and preached the word of God, if we gather up his sayings and maxims, and examine the rules he gave to others, we shall find ourselves in possession of a store of teaching so rich as to render Philip a great master of Christian perfection.

Were there indeed nothing distinctive in S. Philip's spiritual method it would be enough to allude to it in passing; but, if I am not mistaken, that method has a character peculiarly its own, and therefore deserves

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careful study. Three centuries have passed away, and still we not unfrequently hear it said that this or that saintly person has "the spirit of S. Philip;" now this would have no meaning unless the great original were in the minds of men, with all its special and personal features of holiness. It is incumbent on us then, to study the life of our saint under this aspect, and to view him not only as a priest and a father, but as a master in the spiritual life.

Before speaking of what I regard as distinctive in the spiritual method of S. Philip, I deem it right to show in what sense, and within what limits, one saint in the Catholic Church can have a method of his own, differing from that of any other saint. Now, there is at all times and in all things one only Master in the Church of God, Jesus Christ our Lord. As He is our one Teacher in all that regards faith and morals, so is He the one only Master in that part of sacred science which regards the spiritual life and the perfection of christians. But just as in dogma and in morals there has been an outward and extrinsic growth and advance,[1] so have the principles which mould the spiritual life assumed different forms, while they are always in substance the same, always setting before us the words of Jesus: *Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.*

There are two points in S. Philip's spiritual method, when viewed in general and as a whole, which make it worth our study, and predispose us to love it. The first is, that it offers itself to us just as the middle ages were passing away and the modern time beginning; it is thus fresh, and young, and precisely adapted to the times in which we ourselves are living. And the

[1] See my *Dottrina cattolica*, lib. iii. cap. 8.

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second is, that it did not grow up in the desert, nor in the solitude of the cloister, but in the very heart of Rome; and hence it is a method suited to men of every condition of life, to all who wish to live as christians and to attain perfection. It is a method which puts no insuperable difficulties in the way, and which yet sets no limit to the soul in its ascent towards God.

If we examine it in detail, the first characteristic note of Philip's spiritual method is a most tender and especial charity towards others. It is of course true that the love of our neighbour is, like the love of God, of the essence of the christian life. But justice is an aspect of charity towards others, no less than mercy; and some saints have seemed called by God to illustrate the justice of charity, and others its mercy. And then, while charity is ever in substance the same, it sometimes assumes a form so gentle, and tender, and loving, that it seems almost a new virtue, or rather a special outward and visible perfection of the virtue. Now of this gentleness and tenderness of charity Philip was a master and teacher, and it pleased God to predispose him by natural character for his office.

We have seen how gentle and affectionate his heart was. His biographers note, as a feature of his character, his tenderness towards animals. They tell us, for instance, that once when he saw a father of the Congregation crush a lizard with his foot he was much grieved and said: "Cruel man, what harm did that poor little creature do you?" We see in this disposition another point of resemblance between him and S. Francis of Assisi, whose love for animals was so great. So when S. Francis saw a man carrying two lambs carelessly on his shoulder he said: "Why do you make my brothers the lambs suffer so much, carrying them in

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that way with their legs tied and their heads downwards?" We read of S. Francis that hares and pheasants would seek refuge under his robe, and in the same way dogs and birds and other animals fled often for shelter to S. Philip. When Francis passed through the meadows he would salute his sisters the sheep; and one day when he was going to pray on Mount Alvernia a large flock of birds hovered around him, twittering joyously and fluttering their wings at his coming. And Bacci tells us that Luigi Ames, a Frenchman and a penitent of Philip's, had two birds which sang most charmingly. He gave them to the saint, who accepted them on condition that Luigi should come every day to look after them, a condition imposed in order that he might be drawn to a more perfect life. Luigi consented; and one day when Philip was ill he found the cage-door open, and one of the little birds was playing around the saint's face, and singing most sweetly. Philip seemed very much pleased, and asked Luigi if he had trained the birds to do this, and Luigi said he had not. Philip then drove the little creature away, but it came back again and again, fluttering from his face to his feet, and from his feet to his face, as if it could not bear to leave him.[1]

Another evidence of Philip's great tenderness of heart is the readiness with which he shed tears, although there was no trace of anything effeminate or sentimental in his character. This has been especially

[1] In illustration of Philip's love of animals we are told of his great fondness for a cat, of which he made great use in providing mortifications for his penitents. In the Vallicella manuscript we read that when the saint had received a present of some partridges he sent them to the Marchesa Giulia Orsini Rangoni, one of his spiritual children, with an injunction that they were not to be killed. Also that a chamberlain of S. Charles being once ill at S. Girolamo, Philip, *to cheer*

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noted by his biographers, so that one chapter of his life has the title—Philip's gift of tears. It is true that this was an especial gift of God, but it was also an indication of the natural sensitiveness and tenderness of his heart. If Philip heard any one speak of God his eyes would fill with tears; if he was speaking himself he would often weep so abundantly that he could not go on with his discourse. And thus in the later years of his life he gave up preaching, because he could not by any effort of his will restrain his emotion. If he was reading the life of a saint, or meditating, or saying mass, or hearing confessions, or praying, and especially if there was any mention of the Passion of our Lord, his heart would beat and his body tremble with the vehemence of his feelings, and tears would stream from his eyes.

With a heart of such ineffable tenderness, and filled to overflowing with the love of God, Philip's spiritual method was naturally gentle and tender, mild and full of compassion. Very rarely do we meet with any instance of severity, however carefully tempered; all his life was marked by an infinite sweetness of charity. Once only we read that in order to convert a sinner he threatened him with hell, and then he did it so effectually that the sinner felt as though he saw it. He lived amongst men with a loving charity towards all alike which nothing could weary or lessen, whether they were good or bad, noble or plebeian, young or old,

his spirits a little, took from his room a cage with a bird in it, and said to the bird: "Go over yonder," and the bird flew at once to the face of the sick man, who smiled a little, to Philip's great content. Another day a little bird was caught in the chapel in which Philip used to say mass; the saint said at once: "Take care not to hurt it, but let it fly away." And then he regretted his haste, fearing that the bird would not be able to find food for itself.

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his subjects or his superiors. He welcomed those who came to him for the first time as if they had been long his friends, and embraced them affectionately as though he had long expected them. Even towards those who were obstinate in their wickedness he manifested the same cordiality of welcome and invited them to confession by saying: "For the love of God, my son, tell me your sins, for God is waiting to forgive them." He used to say that, for the early stages of a conversion to God, we ought to be quite satisfied if our penitents can be kept from falling into mortal sin. He never reserved any time for himself, nor would have any place barred against the approach of those who had need of him; and Bacci says that his rooms were called by all the school of sanctity, and the home of christian cheerfulness. If ever a father of the Oratory, seeing that Philip was very tired, hindered any one from going to him, he was sure to receive a severe reproof. He said one day, when urged to spare himself somewhat: "I tell you that those of my penitents who are now most spiritual are just those whom I have gained to the Lord by being always accessible, even at night." In order to win sinners, and to infuse fresh fervour into the hearts of his children, he employed a thousand ingenuities and artifices of affection. He would caress them gently, or lay his hand lovingly on their heads, and very often the love that beamed from his eyes and in his smile wrought marvels of conversion. His patience and longsuffering, his virginal purity, his fervour in prayer, the impetuous bounding of his heart, all gave his charity an expression of ineffable and most winning tenderness.

Nor were those loving methods and devices of charity in all spiritual ministrations a merely personal charac-

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teristic; he taught them to all his disciples, and transfused them so successfully into their hearts that they became the note and badge of the Oratory. Not content with the teaching of his own example he would say to them: "I do not like confessors to make the ways of virtue too difficult, especially to those who are newly converted. They should not irritate them by reproving them with anything like harshness. Very often they get terrified at the difficulties of a way so new to them, and turn back again, and live a long time in their sin without confession. Let us, on the contrary, use our every effort to gain them to Christ by compassion and sympathy, by sweetness and love; let us stoop down to them as far as we can; let our aim be to enkindle in their hearts the love of God, which alone can enable them to do great things." This is Philip's school, and this is one of his lessons. And yet Bacci tells us that many found fault with Philip, and even rebuked him with severity, for this his teaching of extreme gentleness, especially towards sinners; and those who censured him were not men of the world, but spiritual persons of holy life. But Philip would never allow these censures and rebukes to disturb his soul, or make him depart from the way he had traced out for himself. On the contrary, as years passed on, his charity became more and more benignant and tender, because a growing experience taught him that he thus gathered more fruit than others gathered by being rigid and exacting. Bacci tells us that Teseo Raspa, one of Philip's early converts, who was a priest and confessor at S. Girolamo, and a holy man but somewhat rigid, declared that he did not like Philip's gentleness and easiness in the confessional; and that little by little all Raspa's penitents left him, and he did but little good,

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while Philip's increased in number daily, and many of them were led to great perfection. Many others remonstrated with him on what they regarded as an excess of benignity and indulgence; but none could draw him out of his own sweet and loving way.

Innumerable facts in Philip's life might be adduced in confirmation of our statement that the foundation of his spiritual method or school was a most tender and compassionate charity towards others; I will content myself with one of these. Marcello Ferro, the same to whom Philip foretold the elections of S. Pius V. and of Gregory XIII., was a Roman cleric of noble birth, and in possession of a rich benefice. Before he came under Philip's influence he used to wear coloured clothes like a layman, and with much finery about them. One day, on the eve of the feast of S. Dominic, being in the cloisters of the Minerva, he happened upon a young man who was a penitent of Philip's, and entered into conversation with him. Amongst other things the young man said to Marcello: "A Father of S. Girolamo called Philip is wont to come to vespers and compline at the Minerva; what a blessed thing it would be for you if you were to speak to him." The cleric thereupon entreated him to introduce him to that father Philip of his. Just at that moment Philip entered the church in company with Giambattista Salviati, Costanzo Tassone, Giovanni Animuccia, and others of his spiritual family. The young man pointed out Philip to Marcello, who followed the saint into the church and kept near him. He noticed that Philip knelt down, covered his face with his hands, and began to weep; and that throughout compline he trembled and shook like a leaf stirred by a gust of wind. Marcello could not take his eyes off the saint and by degrees a strange feeling

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of awe sank down upon his soul. When Philip had finished his prayer, Marcello drew near to him and spoke to him. Philip received him with his wonted affection, and invited him to come and hear the sermons at S. Girolamo. Marcello went, and in a few days he felt drawn to make to Philip a general confession of his life. Philip not only manifested to him the secrets of his heart and his most hidden sins, but before giving him absolution he threw himself on Marcello's neck and said to him: "O my son, resist not the Holy Ghost; God desires your salvation." After this Marcello went every day to see the saint, and still wore his gay secular dress; and Philip was so far from rebuking him that he did not even allude to it. He tried only to excite in his heart a deeper compunction, and to inspire him with the love of God. In fifteen or sixteen days Marcello began to feel ashamed of his secular dress and laid it aside of his own accord, and became one of Philip's most beloved disciples. This fact is the expression of Philip's spiritual method—let us lay it well to heart.

Another distinctive feature of S. Philip's school of christian perfection is the form he gave to mortification. Mortification indeed, like charity, is of the essence of the christian life; but Philip's mortifications, like his charity, had a character quite their own. In his school far less prominence was given to outward and bodily mortifications than had been usual in older schools; and, on the other hand, spiritual and internal mortifications were made more frequent and more searching. If we look at the life of our saint we see that his own bodily mortifications were unremitting and severe, as became one who would reach the heroism of perfection in everything. For many years he slept mostly in the

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catacombs or on the bare ground; his food was bread and herbs; he passed whole nights in prayer; he chastised and subdued his flesh with hair shirts and disciplines. In later years the duties of his ministry and his frequent infirmities compelled him to relax, to some extent, the austerity of his life; but it was always to the end a model of perfect christian penance. We know that he allowed himself only four, or at most, five hours of sleep; and that even when he had moderated the rigour of his abstinence he very seldom ate even fish, or used a milk diet, while meat was almost unknown to him. He would sometimes say, when passing a butcher's shop: "By the grace of God I have no need of that sort of thing." Even of his slender allowance he always set apart something for the poor; and when fears were expressed that he might injure his health by his great abstinence, he would say with a smile: "I eat little because I don't want to become fat like our friend Francesco Scarlatti." All through his life, and even in extreme old age, he disciplined himself with chains of iron; and he always treated his innocent body with rigour and severity that he might keep it in subjection to the spirit, and exercise over himself that full dominion which is the root of all true greatness. Still, in regard of outward and bodily penances, Philip is not to be compared with many other saints, especially those of the middle ages, for it was his mission to assert the superiority of spiritual over bodily mortification; and this is one prominent feature of his spiritual method.

And indeed, if we look at Philip as a master and teacher of bodily mortification, we see that he was beyond measure sparing and indulgent towards his disciples. He rarely imposed on them fastings or

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disciplines; on the contrary, when a noble personage asked him for leave to fast, he said: "Messer, no; give alms." When he formed his congregation he did not add one fast to those prescribed by the Church to all Christians; and the only outward mortification he enjoined was that regular use of the discipline of which we have already spoken. We have seen how he urged the Dominican novices to eat, though of course in moderation. Although his own abstinence was even excessive, he was most liberal and indulgent towards his disciples. "Eat without scruple," he would say to them, "whatever God has prepared for you at the common table; no delicacies, no dishes prepared on purpose for you, no gluttony; but, whatever God provides for you, that take with simplicity of heart from His hand." And hence, in order that spiritual persons should not injure their health, or lose themselves in childish scruples, he used to say that it was in general better to give the body rather too much food than too little; because it is very easy to lessen the quantity, while if the constitution be once impaired it is not easily set up again. So tender and gentle was his asceticism that he sometimes attributed to the devil the desire of inordinate and uncommanded mortifications. Hence one of his maxims was this: "Satan is wont in his craft to urge spiritual men to penances and other bodily austerities, in order that they may permanently injure their health by indiscretion." "If you will do this," he would say, "you will cease to attend to works of far greater profit, and you may be so frightened by the infirmities you have brought on yourselves that you will give up your wonted exercises and leave the service of God." And thus we see that, in Philip's school of asceticism, there is an extraordinary and

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unwonted gentleness and considerateness in regard of fasts and abstinences, of watchings and other bodily penances.

If we turn to spiritual mortifications, we see at once that Philip was so ruthless in the use he made of them for himself and for his disciples, that we might be at first sight tempted to think that he erred as much by excess of severity in their regard, as by excess of gentleness in regard of bodily penances. The reason of this we shall see presently; let us first apprehend the fact as it comes before us in the saint's life. In his practice of spiritual mortifications Philip was unrelenting, unceasing, fertile in invention, uncompromising. He was always mortifying himself, always mortifying those who learned of him. It was the one fixed idea of his life; in all else he was ineffably gentle, in this alone he seemed at times almost harsh, unjust, and without pity. We must not hide from ourselves this side of Philip's character, this distinctive feature of his school of asceticism. Some may deem it exaggerated; but there is the fact, and we can neither conceal it nor change it. In this respect Philip went far beyond the most rigid saints of the middle ages, and few, if any, of the saints of modern times have equalled him.

What then was the end he proposed to himself in these mortifications? Philip's aim was to lessen, if he could not entirely destroy, the fair fame which naturally follows the man who is just and holy. We see that he was haunted by the thought of the good opinion others may have of us; it troubled him, he was afraid of it, he looked on it as full of dangers, he was unresting in his warfare against it. In this warfare there was something unusual, something almost whimsical and humorous, with which perhaps Philip's natural character

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had something to do, but which he did seriously and on principle, for an end the noblest and highest. And this end is, that a man may be free, not only from all bondage to outward things, to his senses, to earthly affections, but also, and above all, from that insatiable desire of esteem which either produces, or is itself, vain glory.

Terrible indeed to all good christians are these temptations to vain glory, daily recurring and without intermission. S. Augustine felt the danger of them, and says: "This wish to be feared or loved by men, for no other end than the deceiving pleasure there is in it, is only a most wretched and unseemly arrogance. Because it seems necessary for the due discharge of our social duties that we should be loved and feared by men, the enemy of our true blessedness comes down on us, sows his snares all along our way, and cries: well done, well done! that while we stoop to gather up this applause we may be taken unawares, and set our joy not in Thy truth, O my God, but in the deceitfulfulness of men. And thus are we taken captive by the desire to be loved and feared, not for Thy sake, O Lord, but in place of Thee."[1] This danger was in Philip's times far greater than it had ever been before, and therefore our saint guarded against it with such rigour of precaution.

This teaching our saint expressed in very few words; it comes out in a few familiar sayings of his, dropped here and there by the way, without any formal statement or proof. To teach us that we should mortify our understanding he was wont to say: *the whole stress of the christian life is in the mortification of the "razionale,"* that is, of the overweening presumption of the under-

[1] S. Aug., Confessions, x. 36.

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standing. Sometimes, when he would enforce the necessity of mortifying the pride of the intellect, he would touch his forehead and say: *all the holiness of a man lies here, within the breadth of three fingers.* At other times he said: *the man who is not ready to bear the loss of his own honour and esteem for the sake of Jesus Christ, will never make any progress in spiritual things.* Often, when his beloved disciples were gathered around him, he would say: *my sons, humble your minds, submit your judgment.* On another occasion he said: *see to it that you conquer yourselves in little things, if you would conquer in great things.* And this same idea of mortification is laid down as the very foundation of the rule of the Oratory, which, though not written by Philip, is the most faithful reflexion of his spirit: *it is the distinguishing note of each one of our Congregation, to love to be unknown, and to be accounted as nothing.* These are the maxims which S. Philip repeated with great earnestness to his disciples. They are few and brief, but beautiful and weighty; they light up the mind and contain a treasure of wisdom. The more we ponder them, the more we find in them of the spirit of Him who humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, not shrinking from the shame of the cross.

But Philip, as was his wont, taught far more by what he did than by what he said; and hence the light of his teaching and of his method in this matter of mortification shines on us with fullest brightness from his life. If we follow him step by step from the day on which he was made a priest, we see that no thought lay so near his heart as this, of mortifying himself in regard of honour and esteem. It is not enough for him that he does not seek the vain glory which the world bestows, he longs for its derision and contempt. And

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why is this? Is there not something excessive and exaggerated in his love for *the foolishness of the cross?* How can we do good to our brethren if they despise us? And is not a fair fame a holy as well as a choice treasure, to be prized and guarded with care? All this is quite true; but we must remember that a saint does not make war on honour and esteem, but on himself; because he knows that he is always too prone to run after the praise of men, and put self in the place of God.

And in truth the honour of men might well seem a temptation to Philip, for he was both esteemed and honoured beyond all measure. All Rome was full of the fame of his miracles and prophecies; he had disciples without number and of singular merit, and among them those whose renown was then but in its dawn—Baronio, Bozio, and Tarugi; the Popes venerated him and looked on him as a saint; the greatest men of his time, S. Ignatius, S. Charles, S. Camillus of Lellis, S. Felix of Cantalice, and also S. Catherine dei Ricci, were his friends; of the cardinals and prelates, all who were most distinguished for learning and virtue rested on him and sought his guidance; religious of various orders, nobles of Rome and the people, obeyed him and hung on his words. He had always lived in Rome, his work was the apostolate of Rome, and he could find no other way of concealing the virtues and the miracles which drew the eyes of all upon him. It was quite natural, then, that the shouts of applause which seemed to S. Augustine so full of peril should appal Philip's humility. If they were not a danger to him, they were full of danger to his disciples. Philip, therefore, energetically and persistently set himself to guard against this danger, and that he might not be loved or feared in place of his Lord, he chose for his own portion

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contempt and dishonour. Never, indeed, did he lose his true influence and repute, for he was always and by all held for a saint; but, although he could not dim the halo which surrounded him, he succeeded in mortifying himself, and in founding on his example a school of christian mortification.

If we turn to this part of Philip's life as it is recorded for us by those who knew him, there are some things which, to those who have not the key to their meaning, may seem silly, ridiculous, and even absurd. We read that he used every effort to appear to others a foolish, vulgar, worthless, and contemptible man, and that he did this most especially when others showed that they venerated him and wished to learn of him as a saint. On the appearance of Cardinals who revere and love him so much, he begins to skip about and jest and laugh just like a simple and witless person; he knows that he is spoken of in Rome as a saint, and so he sets himself to dance in the public squares, and especially where some feast has gathered an unusual concourse of people. He was pointed out in the streets as the worker of miracles; and so, as he went through the city with a number of his penitents, he carried in his hand a large bunch of broom flowers, which he smelt from time to time with evident satisfaction. One day he met a poor mendicant friar on his round of begging, and entreated him to let him drink, in presence of a large number of persons, from one of the little barrels he was carrying. Some went to him with a very natural desire to see the saint of whom they had heard so much; and he would produce some book of fables or jests, and make them listen while it was being read. Around him may be persons of great learning who are astonished at Philip's wisdom; and he will have open before him

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some book of no value, or speak ungrammatically, and show himself very ignorant. That he may not be regarded as a saint, but only a foolish old man, he would go into the church with a gown turned inside out over his cassock, and his berretta cocked on one side; and he would wear in the streets a cloak of marten's fur which had been given him, and of which he tried to show himself very vain. In his time priests wore their beards very long, and therefore he often had half of his cut off, and went thus through the city, delighted when he was called a silly old fool. So we see that he wished for the honour and esteem of men only in so far as it might help him to do them good; and that he stood in great fear of pride and vain glory, and put away from him that applause, the echo of which made S. Augustine tremble.

Among the very many facts of this kind recorded by his biographers I will single out two, in which the saint reveals with more than usual clearness his secret underlying thought. He was one day, together with F. Gallonio, at the house of the Marchesa Rangona, when the Countess Olivarez, wife of the Spanish ambassador, was there. This lady had heard of Philip's great virtue, and to begin a conversation with him she asked him how long it was since he had left the world. Philip pretended to take umbrage at this question, and said: "I don't know that I have ever left it." And then, turning to F. Gallonio, he said: "I say, Antonio, do I not still take pleasure in pretty books, poetry, and tales?" But Gallonio, whose veneration for Philip was exceedingly great, either did not or would not understand his meaning, and answered quite simply: "What wonder, father, that you amuse yourself with poetry and tales, since you cannot in any other way moderate

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the ardour of your love of God?" Philip was much displeased with this answer, and abruptly changed the conversation. When they got home, however, he rebuked Gallonio, saying: "There now, a pretty answer you gave me; may God forgive you! Whatever came into your head that you should say such a thing as that?" Philip's pious intention is seen even more clearly on another occasion. Lorenzo Altieri, a Roman noble, wished much to see the saint, and went to visit him, expecting to be greatly edified. To his great surprise Philip began to laugh and jest, and behaved just like an ordinary man of the world. Altieri could not refrain from expressing his astonishment to Angelo da Bagnorea, a great friend of our saint; and Angelo mentioned this to Philip, and urged him to conduct himself with more gravity when Altieri came again. Philip answered him: "Why, what do you want me to do? I suppose you want me to be on my very best behaviour, that people may say—this is Father Philip who says so many fine things. Be sure of this, that if he comes again I shall behave a great deal worse." These words show us what were the teaching and the practice of our saint in regard of christian mortification.

With his disciples he was so lavish in spiritual mortifications that it would be impossible to enumerate them. He imposed on them all the startling and unheard-of mortifications which he practised himself; and it is worthy of note that we never read that any of his penitents refused the mortifications he prescribed them, however strange and unusual they might be. It seems as if Philip were guided in this matter by a special grace, an unerring supernatural intuition. On some he never laid any great or extraordinary mortifications, while he unceasingly exercised others with

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them. None of them ever suffered from them any real loss or diminution of esteem, though Father Gigli said once laughingly to Gallonio: "I have no honour left, for Father Philip has taken it all away from me;" the mortifications imposed on them by the saint cast only a passing shadow on the light of their souls, and made it shine out far more brightly and steadily than before.

There is something altogether marvellous in the mortifications accepted and joyfully practised by Philip's penitents. The good things of this world, even their personal honour and repute, seemed to become of no account in their eyes, in proportion as they felt the presence of God and the reality of His kingdom. They would, at Philip's bidding, stand and beg at the door of the churches when they were most thronged; they swept the church, and even the porch and the street in front of it; they went from door to door begging a crust of bread for the love of God; they would carry stones and mortar on their backs as if they were ordinary masons. One of his penitents was rather vain of a new and handsome suit of clothes; Philip sent him to S. Mary Major's to ask alms, amongst the most wretched beggars. He also kept by him several pairs of spectacles, and he would make his penitents put them on, and walk about the streets in them. For many years he made great use of a dog which had been given him, and of a cat he kept at S. Girolamo, to mortify his disciples in the strangest and most whimsical ways. It seemed as if he took delight in seeing those whom he most loved exposed to contempt and derision; his real motive was to mortify and slay within them every root and germ of vain-glory, as the good husbandman destroys the weeds which threaten to choke the good

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seed. Sometimes Philip gave his disciples mortifications which might be thought unreasonable and foolish; but they always accepted them, and found in them abundant blessing and grace. Thus he said to a young man, "Go, my son, and ring this bell merrily all along the Via dei Giubbonari." The young man obeyed at once; and as the street was full of people, he got well laughed at, and even hooted as a madman. Another he sent through the streets with a great box-lid on his shoulders, and on it a ludicrous inscription. The disciple went as he was commanded, and reaped a rich harvest of mortification and shame. One he would order to carry his unwieldy dog in his arms along the streets; another, to go through Rome with a hair shirt over his dress; one whom he suspected of taking pride in a fine head of hair, he had shaved like a friar. He turned his cassock inside out and put it on Marcello Vitelleschi, a Roman noble, and bade him go in that guise into the choir of the church with a message to Baronio, who was then Superior. He made one of the fathers of the congregation lie flat on his face in the church in front of his confessional for a considerable time; and others he made do the same thing in the choir of the Minerva. Every one obeyed implicitly; and all overcame every temptation to vain-glory, and became lords and masters of their own hearts. These men, who for the love of God submitted to be ridiculed by men, were men mighty for good, and capable of every sacrifice for truth and justice and virtue.

Such was Philip's practice in regard of mortifications; and it is to be especially noted that he mortified most keenly and persistently those who, by reason of their genius or learning or noble birth, were more likely to be tempted to seek or love the praise of men.

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We shall see, in his treatment of Tarugi and Baronio, how severe and inexorable a saint, in all other respects so loving and gentle, could be in this matter of mortification.

This may suffice to show that S. Philip's school of Christian perfection had these two distinctive notes: an exquisite tenderness of charity, and a preference for, and large employment of, spiritual mortifications. Of other qualities of his wise and loving direction I shall speak in the following chapter; but I cannot dismiss these two leading characteristics of it without asking my readers to note with what profound wisdom they were adapted to the needs of the sixteenth century. They are not now, indeed, the peculiar notes of the fathers of the Oratory, for they have become common to the whole Catholic Church. But the first fruit which sprang up from the evil seed of the protestant heresy was a fierce and unrestrained egotism. When every one found himself his own master in religion and morals; when religion itself, which is necessarily universal, was striving ineffectually to become national; when the highest of all unities, the unity of thought and love, was rudely snapped; when the ties and bands of the ecclesiastical hierarchy were relaxed and thrown aside; and when the very centre of the life of Christendom was contemned and rejected; egotism naturally triumphed without rival or check. Its fatal influence was felt to some extent even amongst Catholics; and though it could not dim the faith of the Church nor lower its standard of perfection, it took the life and the energy out of the faith and the works of many of her children. Hence the great need there was in the sixteenth century to kindle anew in the Church the flame of divine charity. And thus the

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school of S. Philip was, in virtue of its compassionate and tender charity, the very antidote and corrective of the greatest of the evils which then threatened Christendom. We see at once the strong contrast between the egotism of the society of the sixteenth century and the gentle sweetness of Philip's school. And that school did not die out with our saint, but has been handed on from generation to generation, and still lives and gives out its kindly light. From S. Philip's day no other school has been possible. The ineffable gentleness of S. Francis of Sales, of S. Vincent of Paul, and of S. Alfonso, three of the greatest masters of the science of Christian perfection from S. Philip's time to ours, show us that this was appointed by God to be the school or method of the spiritual life for modern times. Our spiritual methods now breathe only the tenderest charity, not only because charity is the peculiar treasure of Jesus Christ and of His Church, but because the intellect of man can be subdued and won by charity alone, now that faith is lost or weakened. Experience has shown us that, against the egotism of unbelief and doubt, the ideas of justice and punishment are powerless, and neither reasoning nor teaching avails. Unless the heart be stormed and taken, the mind of man, dazzled with its own power and beauty, remains closed to every ray of supernatural light.

And equally apparent is the fitness for its time of Philip's school of spiritual mortification. Since the outburst of protestantism, the pride of human intellect has increased beyond all bounds. It affects to exalt that noble creation of God, the mind of man, while it abases and overthrows it; it offers itself as a new and vigorous life, while it in reality leads it further and further away from the source of life, and slays it. Men are more

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vain now than they were of old time, and the seed of this vanity was sown in the sixteenth century, in the revival of paganism, and in the revolt from the Church, which was its result. We are vain above all things of our science, which has certainly made great progress, but which can now no longer raise its eyes above this earth of ours. It would seem that the effort to soar towards heaven is paralysed by some strong but occult force; and this force is nothing but the vanity which dwarfs our souls, and holds them prisoners within the bounds of space and time. Now Philip's school of the spiritual life meets this vanity of our intellect, this pride in our science, with that spiritual mortification which abases the understanding to raise it up to God, and smites down the pride and vanity and greediness of praise which bind it down to earth, so that it cannot wing its flight towards Him. There have been times in which the worst woes of Christendom came from the rude barbarian vigour of the nations of the north, and then christian perfection aimed chiefly at mortifying the body. But when the religion, the morals, and the whole civilization of Europe were threatened with death by an overweening pride of intellect, nurtured by the corruption of Catholics and the delusions of the reformers, then it became imperatively necessary to take measures to mortify the intellect, the heart, the whole spiritual being of man. And hence the spiritual method of S. Philip was in fullest harmony with the wants of the times in which he lived. And since those times are not yet gone by, and we are still gathering, individually and as nations, the fruit of the seed sown in the sixteenth century, so Philip's school lives on and is still fresh in its youthful vigour; and blessed are they who follow its teaching.

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CHAPTER XII.

S. PHILIP'S SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION—CONCLUSION OF BOOK II.

CHRISTIAN perfection, as taught in the school of S. Philip, is always associated with a great gladness and simplicity of heart. These two distinctive notes of the spiritual method of our saint are perhaps less marked and prominent than those already considered, but they cannot escape the thoughtful reader of his life. It will be of great advantage to us to pause awhile upon them; and, that we may not miss their lesson to us, it will be well that we should have clear and definite conceptions of what gladness and simplicity of heart are.

The habitual state of a man who is living in the world as a heathen might live, without the restraint and the support of law, is one of internal agitation and unrest; and in certain circumstances and certain moods of feeling this may become either gladness or dejection. The life of a man who is living for this world alone naturally oscillates between these two conditions, and often passes very quickly from one of them to the other. The gladness that is of the world is in its very nature unrestrained and boisterous; it tends to a reaction, and often indisposes for the duties of life. And the sadness of the world, being almost always a reaction from the excess of its opposite, is weary and

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gloomy, and often despairing. On the other hand, the habitual state of the man who is living according to the mind of Christ is, or should be, one of abiding peace; that peace of God which comes from the perfect order and repose of his affections and thoughts, from the habit of moderation in all things, and from the hope of the life to come; I say peace, and not happiness; for happiness is the exclusion of pain and sorrow, while peace does but lighten them, and help us to bear them with patience. Moreover, the habitual peace of the christian has its own prescribed laws, and may be, as circumstances vary, either joyous or sad. And thus, there is a christian joy and a christian sadness, because the state of man on earth has become one of mingled pleasure and pain, of hope and fear. But in so far as they are christian, both these feelings assume a peculiar and distinctive form; and inasmuch as they tend towards that eternal life which is the last end of man, they clothe themselves with a beauty which is not of earth. Hence both are commended in Holy Scripture; we are bidden to sorrow or be glad, according to the ever-varying dispositions of our souls, and the ever-shifting events of our life. And even the festivals in which the Church pours forth her heart are sometimes joyous, sometimes sad.

The sources of natural gladness lie all around us, and the moderation with which the christian enjoys it, and the supernatural end towards which he directs it, render it holy and spiritual. The joy of a mother in her first-born child is not only beautiful, but holy and sanctifying, if it be joined with faith and gratitude to God. But God Himself is the one fount of christian gladness of heart. To rest one's mind in the infinite truth and to be united in heart to the infinite good; to have a

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hope that we shall one day see God and possess Him; to meditate on His infinite perfections, and to see in the creature the image and the revelation of His unutterable goodness; to lose ourselves in the gracious mysteries of our redemption; these are to a christian heart sources of ever-flowing and inexhaustible gladness. On the other hand, there is a sacred and religious sadness in presence of the dread mystery of the evil which racks the minds and hearts, no less than the bodies, of men. Sin and pain in all their forms are the roots of our sadness; and that sadness may be sacred and purifying, if the soul live in faith and hope and charity. The sorrow is holy which we feel for sin as an offence against God; and the pain holy which is regarded and accepted as expiation, or as satisfaction. And thus, there is in the christian religion a stream of holy gladness fed by the thought of God, and there is a current of holy sorrow springing from sin and pain, when considered in their relations with God. Tabor and Calvary combine to inspire and beautify the faith and the life, as well as the art and the whole civilization of Christendom. The gladness of a christian heart comes more directly from God, and is more directly referred back to God. It is wrung with sorrow at view of the creatures of God wounded and despoiled by sin, and wasted by suffering. And hence, the saints are more generally cheerful than sad; and, among the saints, those who have lived most alone with God, away from the mournful spectacle presented by the world, have been in a marked degree cheerful and glad of heart. It is true that Philip lived always in the world, always in closest contact with its many evils; and yet in him the thought of God was so supreme and absorbing that he became a representative and type of

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christian joy, and made it one of the most characteristic notes of his school of christian perfection.

We have seen that Philip was always cheerful and even merry; his heart was never clouded with morbid melancholy, but bright with a serene and sunny gladness. And yet his life was not one which would naturally tend to make him cheerful. He lived in evil days; he was always amidst the throng of sinners and the sick; his own illnesses were many and severe; he had his full measure of persecution and wrong; of the innocent joys of life, with the single exception of holy friendships, he permitted himself little experience. That sweet cheerfulness of heart which seemed so wonderful to his contemporaries, and accompanied him to extreme old age, sprang from one source, the abiding thought of God. We see this all along his life. When we realize to ourselves the long hours Philip passed in prayer, living as he lived in the heart of Rome, and ever intent on the salvation of souls; when we think of his mass, of the violent efforts he was constrained to make to prevent his ecstasies, and of the causes and effects of the bounding exultation of his heart; we have come upon the source of that irrepressible gladness of heart, that playful manner of speech, that joyous festal look, which endear him to us as they endeared him to those with whom he lived. Philip saw God always and in everything, and hence flowed his abiding peace of soul, and the cheerfulness which nothing earthly could dim.

Now Philip made this holy cheerfulness an essential part of his spiritual teaching. He would say to his disciples: *my sons, be cheerful. I want you never to commit sin, but to be always cheerful and gay of heart.* One maxim of his was: *a cheerful and glad spirit*

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attains to perfection much more readily than a melancholy spirit. One day, when he wanted to test the goodness of a young Capuchin who was both by nature and on principle cheerful, he tormented him in a hundred ways, treated him as an insignificant and worthless fellow, threatened to strike him with an old sandal, ordered him to take off his habit as being unworthy to wear it, and at last drove him away abruptly and with every indication of contempt. But when he saw that the Capuchin was still unruffled and cheerful, he called him back and said: *persevere, my son, in that cheerful spirit of yours; that is the best way to reach perfection.* Another very common lesson of the saint was this: *I will have no scruples, no low spirits.* And the source of the cheerfulness he prized so greatly and inculcated so constantly is pointed out in another frequent lesson: *he who seeks recreation apart from the Creator, or consolation out of Christ, will never find it.* Philip's teaching on christian gladness of heart is, like all his teaching, summed up in a few words, but they suffice to make us understand both the man and his spiritual method.

Philip's conduct is always the surest confirmation of his doctrine, and its best comment and illustration. In the Congregation of the Oratory he was surrounded with grave men who had attained great perfection in virtue. And yet Father Manni, who lived with him, says: "Philip ruled with marvellous simplicity, benignity, and condescension; he showed that he loved us all, and he would call us into his room, and make us play and dance and sing." These words alone are a revelation of the spirit of S. Philip's school. Moreover, Philip was always very cheerful and gay in conversation; when praying his face beamed with gladness as of one

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who had found a secret and mysterious delight; even his miracles he wrought with a cheerful air, and often passed them off with a jest. He felt the sufferings of others as his own, and always with a vehement longing to infuse consolation and gladness where he found sorrow and mourning. There are whole chapters of his life which are made up of instances of his marvellous power to console and cheer the afflicted. We read of very many scrupulous persons who were cured by Philip, and of many whose melancholy he dispelled and replaced with a genial cheerfulness. Gallonio says that Philip seemed as if born on purpose to comfort those in affliction. He cured a Roman noble, who was almost beside himself with melancholy, by making him sing for some time with Father Antonio Gallonio, and then pressing him affectionately to his heart. There was in the Congregation a Father Francesco Bernardi who suffered greatly from extreme dejection of mind; Philip cured him by saying to him: *come now, let us run a race;* and similar cures might be related without end. In Rome people went to Philip as to a cheerful saint, who made every one about him cheerful too; and even in our own day his memory lingers among the people as that of a great saint, who was very gay and cheerful and even sportive. Some of his penitents relate that when they were suffering from the most severe depression of spirits, a few words from Philip would fill their hearts with gladness; to some he would bring the sunshine back by laying his hand on their heads; some were filled with a secret and unknown joy by being drawn by him to his beating heart. Some found it enough, in their darkest moments, to turn their eyes towards him; and some, if they did not find him at home, were content to stay for a few moments in his

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room, and used to say: "Philip's room is not a room, but a paradise." All agreed that in the art of comforting and infusing gladness there was no one like him in all Rome. And thus there grew up around Philip a school of disciples like himself, easy, natural, and genial, cheerful, and even playful; and, like Philip, they thus overcame temptations, put scruples to flight, and led multitudes to a high degree of perfection. All around Philip was an atmosphere of peace and gladness of heart; to be with him was to be cheerful, and to learn that christian cheerfulness is an instrument of greatest good, and a means of perfection.

Another feature of S. Philip's spiritual school is a singular, and I had almost said excessive simplicity; and I wish to insist on this the rather that there is in our own day a tendency to wander from the old simple ways, and to clothe piety in artificial and complicated forms. And yet if we look at christian simplicity in its substance, it is necessary not only to those who are striving towards perfection, but to all who would call themselves christians. The principle implied in the words of our Lord: *let your speech be yea, yea; no, no;* would make our inner and our outer life simple with the simplicity of the dove. Christian simplicity is not, as some affect to believe, either ignorance, or weakness of mind, or an excess of mere good-nature; it is the reflexion, or rather the shining out upon our daily life, of the candour and clearness of the soul. Souls that are simple are always transparently and luminously truthful; and so was Philip, and so he willed all his disciples to be. He abhorred all pretence, all artifices and deceits, however ingenious; he was all his life long absolutely true, frank, plain, and simple; simple even in his demeanour and his dress, in his gestures, his

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walk, and in everything. Bacci sets forth this virtue of Philip and of his school thus: "He had a very great dislike of affectation, both in himself and in others, as well in words as in dress and other things. He carefully avoided certain ceremonies which savour of the world, and certain compliments in use in courts, and showed a great love of christian simplicity in everything. And hence when he had to deal with men of worldly prudence he did not easily get on with them; and it displeased him greatly to have to do with two-faced persons, who were not loyal and frank in their doings. He was a mortal enemy of all lying, and often said to his disciples: *keep yourselves away from lies as from the plague.*"

To ensure success in his great undertakings Philip did not, most certainly, omit human means; but these means were always the simplest possible, and it was evident that even in them he put but little trust. He believed that success came from God and from truth, and from God and from truth he patiently waited for it. Few men have laboured so unremittingly as he, and few have gathered fruit so abundant in the vineyard of the Lord. And yet his life was poor and lowly, without any show of devices or contrivances, always candid and straightforward; his words were brief, concise, and free from every taint of artifice; his knowledge was simple, and in theology he held fast to the exact, though profound and subtle, teaching of S. Thomas. Throughout his life he acts always openly and loyally; his heart is in his words; he does not lack prudence, but the wily and, too often, shifty and false prudence of the world he held in abhorrence. In a word, there was in him no respect of persons, no desire to appear, but only to be, what he ought to be; no deference to the customs

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or tastes of the day, no fear of the opinions or judgments of others, no tortuous ways, no outward show in the service of God; everywhere and always a simplicity, an openness and a candour which seemed at times carried to excess, and made some undiscerning persons regard him as a man of little prudence, of few resources, and slender wisdom. Such was the simplicity of S. Philip and his school; nor need I speak of it further, because the light of this virtue has shone out upon us as we have accompanied him thus far in his life, and will shine more brightly still as we draw towards its close.

But before leaving what I regard as the especial characteristics of S. Philip's school of the spiritual life, I cannot refrain from pointing out the wisdom and the fitness of this inculcation of gladness and simplicity of heart in the sixteenth century, as the counterpoise and the remedy of its evil tendencies. It has been often remarked that, side by side with the growth of earthly riches and of egotism, a morbid melancholy, and a weariness of life verging on despair, have in these modern times increased amongst men. And hence that dreary resource of suicide, unknown and almost unthought of among the christians of earlier ages. The same remarks apply to craft and cunning, which have steadily grown with the growth of wealth and with the longing to possess it. A school, then, of christian virtue which gives such prominence to cheerfulness and simplicity was most seasonable in the sixteenth century, the age of weariness and *ennui*, of cunning and of craft; and very seasonable now to us who are, for good and for evil, reaping the fruit of the seed then sown. If then, we would again become good christians, and most especially if there is in our hearts a desire to make some little progress in the way of christian perfection,

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let us learn in the school of S. Philip, that school so charitable and so mortified, so glad and so simple.

Hitherto we have been considering what was peculiar and distinctive in Philip's school of christian perfection; we will now glance at other points of his teaching, that we may have a fuller knowledge of our dear saint as a master in the spiritual life. He never professed to give his disciples a complete body of teaching, but from time to time he impressed on them some maxim which was as seed cast into good and prepared ground, and which took root and brought forth abundant fruit. And if we bring these sayings of his together, and view them as a whole, we shall see that he had in his heart a complete method of spiritual direction. His teaching was natural and spontaneous, without reasoning or apparent system; it was a teaching of the heart, and when a heart is, as Philip's was, glowing with the love of God, what light on our way can be so cheering and so sure?

One of his sayings was, that priests who had the opportunity should say mass every day, and to those who omitted doing so on pretext of occupation, or study, or recreation, he would say: *those who seek consolation out of its proper place seek their own damnation. He who wishes to be wise while keeping aloof from the true Wisdom, and saved without the Saviour, is not wise, but a fool.* He used to express his longing to love God and to suffer martyrdom for Him, by saying: *may S. Antony's fire burn you! May you be slain for the faith of Jesus Christ!* And we are told that he said this even to Pope Gregory XIV. He had a very great devotion to our Blessed Lady, and his devotion was tender, loving and simple. He would invoke her with the words, *mamma, mamma mia,* and he was pleased when his

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penitents and disciples did so. He took especial delight in conversing with her, as a child with its mother, and often passed whole nights thus. He was wont to say to his disciples: *O my sons, be devout to our Lady; love Mary much!* In his mind he could never separate Mary from Jesus, and he taught his spiritual children to use as ejaculations the simple words: *Virgin Mother!* and again: *Mary, mother of God, pray to Jesus for me.* And often his countenance would glow with rapture as he showed them how in these two words *Virgin* and *Mother* lie all the grandeurs of Mary.

Philip had unbounded confidence in the power of prayer. He used to say, and he taught his children to say: *Lord, now that I have time to pray, I can obtain of Thee all I ask.* His great trust in God would sometimes break forth in the words: I wish this or that thing to come to pass; and so it was. In prayer he would sometimes make use of the beauty of nature to fill him with God; for to him, as to all great men, nature is ever telling the glory of God. In the summer, when not hindered by any duty, he would withdraw to one of the highest rooms of the house, from which he could see the sky and the fields, that the sight might raise his heart to God. At S. Girolamo he had a kind of shed made on the roof for this purpose; and at the Vallicella he made a terrace, where, in his later years, he passed many hours in prayer. In some saints, and especially in those of Italy, the sense of the beauties of nature is intensely vivid, as we see in S. Benedict, S. Francis, and our own S. Philip, because to them nature is a mirror in which they behold the beauty of God. At night he would often rise to pray, and, when the fathers remonstrated with him, he gave them this lesson: *It is no time for sleep, for paradise was not made for sluggards.* He very

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often read the Holy Scriptures, the Fathers, and a few chosen books of devotion; and he urged his disciples to keep such books always by them, because, he said, they feed us, who are but children in the spiritual life, with the milk of true wisdom. The Holy Scriptures especially he would read with great composure and recollectedness, meditating on them, and reading them again and again, until his heart burned within him. He urged this on his disciples, and always showed a great predilection for the Epistles of S. Paul, in which S. Chrysostom took so great delight. He was wont to give many precious counsels to those who wished to learn how to pray. He would say, for instance: *To learn to pray, the best means is the sense of our unworthiness. The true preparation for prayer is habitual mortification. He who wishes to pray without mortifying himself is like a bird trying to fly before it is fledged.* To one of his penitents, he said: *be humble and obedient, and the Holy Spirit will teach you to pray.* To another: *the best preparation for prayer is to read the lives of the saints, not from mere curiosity, but quietly and with recollectedness, a little at a time; and to pause whenever you feel your heart touched with devotion.* He urged the Fathers of his Congregation never to be absent from the evening Oratory and discipline. Once, when the physicians had peremptorily forbidden him to spend so much time in prayer, he was heard to say to Father Gallonio: *Ah me, my Antonio; I seem as if I had become a brute beast.*

When speaking of perfection in general, Philip used to say that, to do anything in the service of God, we must not content ourselves with mediocrity in virtue, but long to do great things for God; and, he added: *you ought to wish to surpass in holiness and*

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in love even S. Peter and S. Paul; and, if you cannot do this, you will at least do all your good works with a great desire of perfection. For times of spiritual dryness, when all is dark around the soul, and even the thought of God is wavering and obscure, he gave this advice: *imagine yourselves to be spiritual mendicants in the presence of God and His saints, and, as such, go round from saint to saint, imploring an alms with the same real earnestness with which the poor beg.* Philip exercised beginners in the spiritual life in meditations on the four last things, and he was wont to say that *he who does not go down into hell in his lifetime, runs a great risk of going there when he dies.* To young men, he gave these counsels, if they would keep their hearts pure: *shun evil company; do not nourish the body too daintily; abhor idleness; pray much; be frequent at the sacraments, and especially at confession.* In order to give them courage to do good, he would say: *happy are you, my boys, for you have time to do good;* and, in his humility, he would often add: *you have time to do the good I have never done.* In regard of purity, he gave them a rule of exceeding wisdom: *in all other temptations, he who fights overcomes; in this, my sons, he overcomes who runs away.* He urged on all a most watchful modesty and reserve, and it was noted that, in everything connected with purity, he was most severe and exacting.

On detachment from the riches and vanities of the world, his teaching was of singular beauty and value. One day, having perceived that one of his penitents had been eagerly accumulating some little property, he said to him: *my son, before you got that property, you had a face like an angel, and it was a pleasure to look at you; now you are quite changed; you have lost your*

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wonted cheerfulness and are always preoccupied and sad; I advise you to look to yourself. Another day, Philip said to Egidio Calvelli, a lay brother of the house: *Do you wish for money?* Egidio answered: No, father, I don't care about money. *Well, then,* said Philip, *if that is the case, you and I will go to Paradise, and I myself will lead you thither; but, on this condition, that you always pray to God to keep you from ever wishing for money.* To confessors, he said: *lay this well to heart; if you want the soul, don't touch the purse.* And he enjoined on them that they should never have anything whatever to do with wills, *because men of the world will always suspect you, no matter how good and pure your intentions may be.* Avarice he called the plague of the soul, and he always had the worst possible opinion of covetous persons. One of his sayings was: *he who is in any degree possessed by avarice will never make any progress in virtue. He who wishes for money will never be a spiritual man. It is far easier to convert to God the sensual than the covetous.* He was often heard to say: *give me only ten men truly detached, and I feel sure I could convert the world.* To the Congregation he said: *God will never fail to give you money; only take good care that, when you have money, you don't lose spirituality.* And very often when rich persons asked his permission to fast or practise some mortification, he would answer: *No, no; give alms.*

Philip had a penitent whose name was Francesco Zazzara, who was studying law with an absorbing eagerness, that he might make his way and obtain advancement at court. The saint saw that there was in Francesco an inordinate desire of the glory and rewards of the world, and so one day he sent for him. The youth came and knelt at his feet, and Philip,

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gently caressing him as he spoke, set out before him, one by one, the daydreams of his youthful ambition. "Happy you, dear Francesco," he said; "you are studying now, and then one day you will be doctor, and will gain money and raise your family; and then one day you may be even a prelate, till you have nothing more to long for." And he went on speaking of other greatnesses and honours to which Francesco might aspire, repeating again and again the words "Oh, happy you!" Francesco was somewhat surprised, but it all seemed quite natural to him—these were the very dreams of his fancy and his hope, and Philip entered into them and approved them. And then Philip drew the youth's head tenderly to his heart, looked earnestly at him, and whispered in his ear: *And then?* These words were quite a revelation to Francesco, and he went home with the echo of them in his heart. I am studying now, and I shall become this and that—*and then?* He left the world, gave up all for God, and served Him as a father of the Congregation to his death. These words, which bring before us the fleetingness of time and the vanity of all that exists only in time, were often on Philip's lips, and sank deep into the hearts of his disciples; again and again in the stress of temptation and in the dark hours of life, have they found light and strength in the words—*and then?*

Even ecclesiastical dignities, when viewed on their earthly side, seemed to Philip only vanity; and when they were proffered him he raised his eyes to heaven and said: *Paradise, Paradise!* On one such occasion he said to those around him: *my sons, take good heed to my words; I would rather pray God to send me death, or to smite me with a stroke, than allow me even*

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to think of such dignities. I desire, indeed, the spirituality and the virtues of cardinals and Popes, but certainly not their dignity.

Philip was throughout his life a consummate master of humility and patience. As we are told that S. John the evangelist was continually saying to his disciples, "My little children, love one another," so Philip was never weary of repeating the words: *My sons, be humble, be always lowly.* In one of his few letters he says: *humble yourself always, and be lowly and of no repute in your own eyes and in those of others, that you may become great in the eyes of God.* He said that no one should ever, even in jest, say a word in his own praise, and he added: *If you do a good work and another gets the credit of it, rejoice greatly; for whatever glory you lose in the eyes of men you will find again with God.* Another of his instructions was this: *cast yourself with confidence into the arms of God; and be very sure of this, that if He wants anything of you He will fit you for your work and give you strength to do it.* He was often heard to say: *pray to the Lord that if He give you any virtue or gift of any kind, He may give you with it grace to keep it hidden, that you may always live in holy humility.* He would not ever allow any one, however holy, to fancy that he was now above all danger of falling; on the contrary, he urged his disciples to say: *O Lord, put no trust in me; for I shall surely fall if Thou uphold me not.* It was a rule with him that the best preservative from sin is lowliness, and the constant repression of all pride and haughtiness of heart. When a man was rebuked for any fault he would not have him take it much to heart, for he said: *very often the fault we commit by too great sadness*

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when we are rebuked is greater than the fault which drew on us the rebuke; and to this he often added the words: *excessive sadness has in general no other root than pride.* He taught his penitents that if they should fall into any sin they should recover themselves by saying: *If I had been humble I should not have fallen.* Those who habitually excused themselves when reproved he would playfully call *Madam Eve.* And of himself he said: *wretch that I am! how many poor peasants and servant-girls will be greater than me in Paradise!* Such was Philip's teaching in regard of humility; his instructions on patience are equally beautiful and instructive.

He was often heard to say: *nothing is so full of glory to a Christian as the suffering for Christ.* At other times he would say: *to one who truly loves God nothing can be more displeasing than the not having occasion to suffer for Him. The worst tribulation of the true servant of God is to be without tribulation.* It often happened that his penitents complained to him of their troubles and mischances, and he would answer them thus: *you ought rather to reflect that you are not worthy of so great a blessing, because trouble and adversities are sure tokens of the love of God.* A confessor was one day grieving much at being unjustly persecuted, and Philip said to him: *how are you ever to teach others patience, if you are yourself so impatient? My son, the greatness of our love of God is known by the greatness of our desire to suffer for His sake.* Another saying of his was this: *in this life there is no purgatory, but only heaven or hell; for he who bears affliction with patience has Paradise; and he who does not, has hell.* He taught, moreover, that God sends us sufferings and sorrows to give us, little by little, a

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distaste for the world; and that the man is very much to be pitied whom God has not yet received into His school of suffering. But Philip knew the depths of the heart of man, and he would therefore never allow his disciples to ask of God tribulations or sorrows; he was wont to say that *it is no little thing for a man to endure those which God sends him day by day.* To inure his disciples to patience, he forbade them to speak much of their troubles, and to dwell upon them, and exaggerate them either to themselves or others. He exhorted them never to lose courage, for it was the way of God, he said, to weave the tissue of our life with ever-shifting sorrows and consolations. And then he added: *never try to evade the cross which God sends you, for you will only find a heavier one.*

Scattered all along his life, we find lessons of exceeding wisdom and beauty, too numerous to be repeated. He greatly dreaded the want of perseverance in well-doing, and often repeated the words of our Lord: *he who endures to the end shall be saved.* He did not put much trust in the religious fervour of the young, and would often say: *wait till they are fledged; then we shall see what sort of flight they make of it.* He urged the necessity of great discretion in the guidance of the young, and indeed of all; and he often said: *don't want to do everything in a day, or dream of becoming a saint in four days.* Another saying of his was, that *it is more difficult to restrain those who want to do too much, than to stimulate those who want to do too little.* He would not allow his penitents to overburden themselves with pious practices and devotions. He advised them rather to do little, but to do it well, and never on any pretext to omit it.

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He was wont to say that we should often renew our good resolutions, because life is an unintermitting struggle. He looked on all changes with great suspicion, and did not like persons to leave their state even for one that was better and higher, without grave deliberation; and he said: *the devil not unfrequently transforms himself into an angel of light, and gets us to give up what is good, under pretext of something better.* And he exhorted all to pray much to God for the gift of holy perseverance.

Our dear master gave many and most useful counsels to priests who are ministering to the sick and the dying; and one of the most noteworthy is this: *do not say many words to those who are dying, but rather aid them with your prayers. Never set up for prophets by saying that this man will die, and that other man recover; for God alone sees the future, and He alone is the Lord of life and death.*

In christian perfection Philip said there were three stages, or steps of ascent towards God. In the first, he found an analogy with the instinct which rules the life of animals; in the second, he saw man with his conflicts and sorrows, and his many contradictions; and in the third, he beheld something akin to the state of holy angels, and a foretaste of the life to come. And thus he said: "The first stage of the christian life is that of those who run after the sensible devotion which God for the most part gives to beginners, in order that they may be drawn on to the spiritual life by this sweetness, just as an animal is drawn by some object of sense. The second is that of those who, though they feel no sensible devotion, yet in the strength of virtue fight against their passions; and this is properly the work of man.

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And the third is as it were an angelic life, and is reached by those alone who, having been long practised in the subjugation of their passions, receive from God, even in this world, a life all peaceful and serene, unruffled and angelic. It is enough for us to persevere in the second of these stages, waiting till God, in His own good time and of His own good pleasure, raise us to the third.

Such was, in a few words, the spiritual school of S. Philip. He has left us no treatise on the way of perfection; his method is gathered from the acts and words of his every-day life. The sayings of his which have been preserved to us, interpreted and illumined by his life, form a body of teaching most real and living and powerful, the light, the strength and the joy of our souls.

And now it behoves us to take up again the thread of the life of our saint; let us, before we close this second book, turn back for a moment to retrace the way we have come, even as those who pause in their journey to recall the spots and the scenes they would impress for ever on their memory.

Philip's life as a priest extends from 1551 to 1575. He was thirty-six years old when he was ordained priest, and he was now in his sixtieth year. He was entering upon old age, but was still hale and strong. In those twenty-four years he had, to a great extent, changed the face of Rome. He had, unconsciously to himself, exercised a most salutary influence throughout the Church, and had taken part in some of the most important events of its history. And all this came to pass without his undertaking any great and conspicuous work. If we except his miracles, Philip's life is that of a holy priest, and seems one that any

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good priest might set before him as a pattern. And Philip was in truth an admirable type of priestly character, and wrought great things because he was free from every kind of bondage; free from the bondage of riches, of pleasures, and of the senses; free from all ambition; free from all low and grovelling attachments, from every bond that chains the soul to earth. This liberty, the liberty with which Christ has made us free, was the foundation of Philip's greatness. To secure this holy liberty he left his country and his home, and seemed to have forgotten his people and his father's house; never once did he look back again; his eye was fixed on the holy hill of the Lord, and every step was directed towards it. To preserve this holy liberty and to avoid all bondage to men, he left the house of his friend Caccia when he was ordained, and thenceforward lived a priest amongst priests.

But what is there in this priestly life of Philip's which clothes it with a beauty so bright and so fair, and which produced effects so marvellous? We have seen how he said mass, how he preached the word of God, how he administered the sacrament of penance, how he visited his friends and penitents in their sickness, how he went often round the hospitals, gathered the young around him, converted sinners, and led the just on to perfection by his example and his teaching, how he conversed with God, and was gentle and loving towards all; this was Philip's life for twenty-four years. Here and there are some things of greater moment, which relieve the monotony of his life; such as the visits to the seven churches, the foundation of the Oratory, his being brought into contact with saints and Popes and men illustrious

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for rank or genius; but this was the substance of his daily life. Now, what rendered it so fruitful? and why do many priests live lives, in outward seeming such as his, but to so little purpose? Philip's priestly life, simple and for the most part uneventful as it was, had this mighty power, because he lived in God. The man disappears from view; we see God alone, everywhere and at all times. The very works which lead to no result if the heart be cold and dead, become an apostolate of boundless power when done with a love such as glowed in Philip's heart. It is not so much what he did, but how he did it, that makes him to us and to all so marvellously beautiful a type of priestly perfection. We may well set him always before us, and strive to express his image in our lives, for the works he did are the works it is our calling and our duty to do. Nor is there anything to prevent our trying to imitate his manner of doing them; the effort will bring its own delight, if we only keep alive in our hearts the flame of divine love. The life and the work of a Catholic priest are a work and a life of love. That is the life we begin on the day when the Church consecrates us to be her priests. And since the heart is the true altar of burnt-offerings, our life must be one of unreserved and entire self-sacrifice. He who aspires to the priesthood without the spirit of love and of sacrifice will clasp only its lifeless fleeting shadow.

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BOOK III.

PHILIP, FOUNDER OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE ORATORY.

CHAPTER I.

THE PRELIMINARIES OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE NEW INSTITUTE—S. PHILIP AND THE BARNABITES—S. PHILIP AND S. IGNATIUS.

THE Providence of God, which had led Philip all along so gently and so tenderly, guided him almost unawares towards the accomplishment of its designs. His first intention had been to live a holy life in the world, and his life as a layman was ordered so as to be the fittest and best preparation for his life as a priest. When raised to the priesthood he always shrank from the notion of becoming the founder of a religious order or even a simple congregation of priests; and yet, in spite of himself, we find him in 1572 the father and master and guide of a large number of priests who loved him, depended on him, and sought from him a rule of life. We cannot say with certainty how many there were of those sons and disciples of our saint; but if we take the priests of S. Giovanni who were directly Philip's subjects, those of S. Girolamo, and others scattered about here and there, I do not

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think we shall err in setting them down as about a hundred. We know from Bacci that five years later, in 1577, there were in the Vallicella a hundred and thirty, and that many more were seeking for admission.

The large number of priests, who had gathered around Philip by degrees and of their own free choice, almost forced on him the idea of a congregation of priests. He saw springing up around him, and cheering the Church with their light, several orders of religious, but no congregation of secular priests had been founded. It is true that the Council of Trent had, by its decrees on seminaries, made provision for the education and instruction of ecclesiastics; but as soon as they reached the priesthood, the students went forth to live separate and apart, exposed to many dangers, and without the aids to perfection furnished by community life, and by exemption from worldly cares. Philip felt this deeply, and therefore he gladly gathered around him as many priests as he could, and moulded their lives on his own. But his profound humility would not as yet allow him to think of forming them into a congregation. His great desire was to be held a man of little learning and no repute; how could he who shrank so sensitively from the praise of men come forward as the founder of anything in the Church? And yet the longing to raise and perfect the life of the priests of the Church grew within him, and the rather that Rome, though very greatly improved, was still far from the moral and religious state to which he hoped to see it raised. Some words in a letter from Tarugi, that true interpreter of Philip's mind, throw light on the saint's feelings at this time. Tarugi was, as we shall see, furthering with his influence and at Philip's wish the foundation of a house of Barnabites in Rome, and in 1574 he wrote to F.

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Tito degli Alessi of Piacenza as follows: "It has been for a long time my eager desire that into this still barren soil of Rome should be cast the good seed you are sowing, that so by its abundant fruit the Divine Majesty may be honoured, and the chastisements averted which now hang threateningly over our heads." Thus both Tarugi and Philip thought the soil of Rome in 1574 unfruitful of good, and feared that its sterility might be visited with extraordinary punishment.

Still Philip could not overcome his reluctance to give a settled form to the Congregation of priests which had thus grown gradually up under his direction, and it is probable that he would not have founded it when he did, had not an event occurred which showed him that further hesitation was impossible. Though the priests of S. Giovanni were separated from their beloved father and master, they lived in great peace, and flourished as plants set by the running waters. A fragrance as of Paradise breathes from the memoirs of that early time, and their life was a life of perfect charity. But this could not last for ever; a priest, whose name is piously concealed, was admitted into the community. For a time he was, or seemed to be, all that could be desired; but by degrees he showed himself to be a man of restless, arrogant, and overbearing character, who spurned all restraint of rule. Philip tried with infinite gentleness to lead him back into the right way, but without effect; he then admonished him with his wonted tenderness of charity, but the haughty spirit would not bend; the unhappy man hardened himself in his sin, and grew day by day more insolent and defiant, until it was judged necessary to dismiss him from the community. Blinded by passion, the poor man went to the Florentines by whom

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S. Giovanni was supported, and brought the foulest and most calumnious charges against his benefactor and the congregation. He gave such plausibility to his statements, and persisted in them so seriously, that the Florentines met several times to discuss the propriety of withdrawing from Philip and the other fathers both the church and the house of S. Giovanni. The storm was rude and violent, and it was endured by the saint with his accustomed humility and patience. In the meetings held by the Florentines it was clear that many were shaken by these repeated calumnies and insinuations; and it is not improbable that they would have come to an unjust and violent decision, had not God raised up among them one who undertook Philip's defence, and exposed the falsehood of the charges brought against him. And thus the storm died away, and the community was left undisturbed.[1] But Philip's heart was saddened. He saw that an impression unfavourable to the fathers lingered in the minds of many of the Florentines. He began to reflect on the precarious position held by his community. So long as the fathers depended on the will or caprice of others, without a church and house of their own, they might be at any moment dispersed, and the work of years thus destroyed. If even the Florentines, who had seemed so attached to him, could be induced by the calumnies of one man to discuss the propriety of expelling the congregation from S. Giovanni, what security had he for its future?

The fathers of S. Giovanni, and very many friends of the saint, now urged on him the necessity of giving a sure

[1] This event in our saint's life is not recorded by Bacci or Gallonio. I have taken my account of it from P. Marciano (Book I. ch. 2), who gives us the words in which it is related by the venerable F. Baronio in a manuscript entitled *De origine Oratorii*.

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foundation to the edifice he had raised so high. They said it was not a question of founding a religious order, or doing anything new and striking, but only of providing for the continuance of a work which the Lord Himself had begun. On the other hand, Philip could not endure the thought of being regarded as the founder and head of a congregation; and after much reflection and many prayers he consented to look about for a church and home for his priests, and to give them the form of a congregation, but he resolved that he would himself remain hidden from view in his little cell at S. Girolamo. The congregation would thus be solidly and securely established, while he would avoid all appearance of being its founder and head.

But here, on the eve of the foundation of the Oratory, we must pause to consider Philip's relations with the Congregation of the Barnabites, which had sprung up a few years before, and which was singularly dear to him. And I speak of it here for two reasons. One is, that several persons, and among them some of Philip's most beloved disciples, had thought seriously of incorporating the rising Congregation of the Oratory with that of the Barnabites; and the other, that there are in certain letters written at this time by a Barnabite father some notices of S. Philip, which are the more precious that they are quite incidental. The good father was writing simply in the interest of his Congregation, without thought of praising Philip or even of describing him.

In the sixteenth century new life and vigour were infused into the older religious orders; but the state of the Church required other orders, in which the monk and the friar should be also a clerk-regular. This transformation or development of the primitive idea of the monastic life was begun by the Theatines, the Congre-

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gation of Somascha, and the Barnabites, and was afterwards effected on a larger scale by the Jesuits. The three orders first named arose about the same time in three different parts of Italy—in Milan, Venice, and Rome. The leading idea of them all is the same—the connecting of the action of the religious orders more closely with the great centres of life and thought; and the two last devoted themselves, moreover, to the education and instruction of the young. The Congregation of the Oratory was, as we shall see, a step towards this transformation; its object was to raise the life of the secular clergy by introducing into it the habits and practices of the religious life. The Barnabites, with whom we are now chiefly concerned, sprang up in Milan in the earlier half of the sixteenth century, and their rule was approved by Clement VII. in 1533. Their professed objects were teaching and preaching, hearing confessions, instructing the young, directing colleges, and giving missions. S. Charles Borromeo valued them highly, and distinguished with a special affection F. Zaccaria of Cremona, one of the founders of the order. To S. Philip they were peculiarly dear; and one of his most beloved friends was the blessed Alessandro Sauli, who was subsequently raised to the episcopate by S. Pius V., and is one of the brightest glories of the Barnabites.

In 1574 some members of the Congregation had been sent to Rome with a view to establish a house in the eternal city; and among them was F. Tito degli Alessi, who soon became an intimate friend of our saint, and who in his letters to his Superior-general speaks much of Philip's great affection, and of all that he did to forward the interests of the Barnabites in Rome. In the first of these letters, F. Alessi writes thus to the

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General: "November 13, 1574. Yesterday I received your letter, together with several others addressed to the Cardinals, and to other friends; and as I was going to S. Geronimo to visit the seven churches with F. Philip, he was the first to get his. It gave him such very great pleasure that he kissed it and fondled it as if it were an infant, so beautiful is the Christian simplicity which clothes the wisdom and prudence of that good father. He is our faithful friend, and greatly desires that we should find a house here,—so much so that he says he will not give me several things he had promised me until we have a house of our own in Rome. He has promised to do all he can to help us, and I know that he will do so. He has introduced us to the Pope's chamberlain, who is one of his spiritual children, and to Fabrizio Massimo, Lord of Castello, who went with us to the seven churches. He has also said that he will send us some penitents; so that he seems to be almost as much one of us as he is of the fathers at S. Geronimo. They treat us quite as if we were of their own community. When we go to their church to say mass, or to the Oratory to hear their pious discourses, F. Tarugi and F. Philip's spiritual children receive us with most cordial affection. There we learn both the letter and the spirit, for many of them possess both. We went one morning to dine with them on F. Philip's invitation, and we have dined with them several times since, by invitation of one of the principal fathers there. Their living is very humble and frugal. They are doing immense good in this city, and great crowds frequent both of their churches, S. Geronimo and S. Giovanni. I shall try to gain from their living example what my own spiritual poverty needs." Again, on the 19th of the same month, F. Alessi writes: "Signor Alfonso Visconti is now in

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Rome. He, too, is one of F. Philip's spiritual children. He attends the Oratory at S. Giovanni very regularly, and so do a great many prelates, and all sorts of people. We go there almost every day. F. Philip and his disciples reap great harvest of souls. Every day there are four or five sermons, and great people and great prelates go to hear them. To-day Cardinal Paleotto was there, and many other nobles. They preach with great fervour, and always very practically and usefully. They confirm what they say with the authority of Holy Scripture, and with examples from the lives of the saints; and at the close there is a little music of a religious kind. They show us as much affection, and help us as much, in every way, as if we belonged to them; and I am sure their feelings towards us are as sincere as they are charitable. F. Philip said to me last evening, amongst other things, that he would like us to have S. Geronimo, where he lives, and that he could provide for himself elsewhere. But I thanked him for his kindness, and said that S. Geronimo was in very good hands. This blessed father most eagerly desires to see us established in Rome, and treats us with singular confidence and affection. In Rome he is held in the greatest veneration; and I am sure no one could help us more effectually in many ways than F. Philip. All his priests yield him the most perfect obedience and the utmost reverence, though he now and then lays on them right good mortifications. It is true that he has such a way with him that he can smite hard without giving offence. May our Lord long preserve him for the good of the souls he loves so well!"[1]

[1] *Alcuni punti della vita di S. Filippo illustrati*, by the Dominican M. Manni, a work of exceeding rarity. The third section of the second

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These letters paint to the life the simple and graceful figure of our dear saint, and show us with what loving charity he treated a congregation of clerks-regular who were trying, amidst many difficulties, to establish themselves in Rome. There is no trace of rivalry or jealousy, but always the same genial affection, the same spirit of self-sacrifice, the same preference for the work of others over his own. He had not as yet a home for himself and his spiritual children, and yet he was eager and almost impatient to see these Barnabites of Milan established in a house of their own, and even expressed his wish to make over to them his own beloved S. Girolamo. And yet at this very time, in November 1574, there seemed great reason to fear that his own fathers would be driven from S. Giovanni, and have to seek a home for themselves.

The affectionate solicitude of Philip for the Barnabites, and his exceeding charity, are strikingly shown in another letter of F. Alessi. On S. Thomas's day 1574, Cardinal Charles Borromeo arrived in Rome for the Jubilee, and he too took great interest in the establishment of the Barnabites. "We were," writes F. Alessi, "at the house of the Lady Duchess Colonna (Anna Borromeo, sister of the Cardinal) together with F. Philip and F. Tarugi, and his Excellency the Duke Colonna was urging these fathers to take a certain place for an Oratory, in which they might continue their sermons and spiritual exercises. Cardinal Colonna came in, and he too urged these fathers to take that place. But F. Philip made answer thus: 'most eminent Lord, I wish your Eminence to provide first

treatise is entitled: *Notizie memorevoli circa S. Filippo Neri poco note;* it contains all these letters of F. Alessi, and also the letter of F. Tarugi, which has been already quoted.

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for these fathers, who are in greater need than we are, and then we will look about for a place.' His Excellency said that he would not fail to do so."

Meanwhile the establishment of the Barnabites advanced very slowly, and Philip obtained for them a few rooms at S. Girolamo, where they lived in community with his own fathers; and we find them settled there on the 12th February 1575. It was at this time, while the sons of S. Philip and the Barnabites were living as if they were one community, that the idea of uniting the two Congregations suggested itself to several persons. Thus we read in a letter of F. Alessi: "We are now living at S. Geronimo, in a little house separated from the community, but so connected with it that I can go to F. Philip's room without going out of doors. In the evening at the Ave Maria we go to the Oratory with F. Philip and many other priests. The prayer lasts nearly an hour, and is partly mental and partly vocal; three times a week we take the discipline in common. These fathers in their great charity show us much affection, especially F. Philip, who could not do more for us if he were a member of our Congregation. He is quite impatient and almost angry that our establishment is so long delayed. The fathers are so affectionate and cordial towards us, that it seems as if they wished to form one body with us. And indeed, this morning, one of the chief among them, who is a doctor and a man worthy of great respect and love, said to us: 'Perhaps we may join you.' We expressed our gratitude, and said that nothing could give us greater pleasure; for in truth the gaining men of their weight and holiness would be like putting eyes into one's head. This matter has been mentioned several times; once in particular, Monsignor Speciano said to F. Philip in our

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presence, that if his reverence would enter our Congregation he would enter with him, and he seemed to me to mean what he said. But F. Philip made answer: *that it was a good thing to change from an evil life to a good one; but that to change from a good state to a better was a thing to be long and well considered;* and then he turned the conversation to other matters. But these fathers seem to me to be exactly what we were before we took our vows, or rather before our rule was confirmed. I note in them all a singular obedience and reverence towards F. Philip, perfect union of heart amongst themselves, and great spirituality and fervour."

In subsequent letters F. Alessi writes at great length of Philip's extraordinary virtue, and proposes to the General that, before admitting any novices into their congregation in Rome, F. Philip's advice should always be taken. "I think," he writes, "that I have told you that I hear that F. Philip has sent more than three hundred subjects into religion; and the wonderful thing is that all whom he has sent have remained, while few or none of those who have entered religion against his advice have persevered." The General thereupon gave directions that no one should be received amongst them in Rome without Philip's consent and approval.[1]

At length, towards the end of March, the Barnabites took possession of a church and a house in Rome, but their removal did not lessen their affection for Philip. On the 23d July F. Alessi writes: "I often visit F. Philip, and go with his reverence to some place of devotion in which sermons are preached and spiritual conferences held; and this I do for the great benefit I

[1] They were empowered to receive novices, with this condition, "that our most entirely beloved friend, the Reverend Messer Filippo Neri, be first consulted."—*Life of the Ven. Anton M. Zaccaria.*

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receive from it, as well as to give pleasure to F. Philip and his many spiritual children." F. Alessi never quite gave up the idea of uniting the two congregations. Thus on the 28th February of the next year, after describing at great length the feast of S. Blase, which had been celebrated in their church with the help of F. Philip and his fathers, he continues thus: "Monsignor Speciano and Monsignor Alfonso Visconti were at our house on the feast of the Purification of the Madonna. They drew me aside into a corner, and told me that I ought to pray much to God; and to get prayers for a certain matter of very great importance, which their lordships were treating with F. Philip, that is to say, their incorporation with us; but they urged me to keep the matter a profound secret, for that no one could say what would come of it. Monsignor Visconti asked to see our rule, and I showed it to him; he said he thought it very prudent and simple. I think that he showed it to the Fathers of S. John of the Florentines, who are spiritual children of F. Philip. But I knew nothing of this at the time, for I had thought only of contenting the pious curiosity of Monsignor Visconti; and so I applied to F. Philip for all I wanted in order to keep our feast, just as I should have applied to your reverence if we had a second house in Rome. The good F. Philip gave orders that I was to have all I wanted, and F. Tarugi supplied us with vestments and all else that was needed for the High Mass. The loving charity with which they helped us shows a close union of hearts with us. Their joining us is indeed a matter of very great importance, by reason of the many admirable subjects F. Philip has; and also because I am sure that, if it were the will of God that it should come to pass, a great many would follow his example, such

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as Monsignori Speciano, Visconti, and others." But it was not the will of God that the two Congregations should be united; Philip's desire and aim were rather to perfect the life of the secular clergy than to share in the blessedness of the life of any religious order, and the idea died gradually away.

This repugnance on the part of Philip to join any religious order is very striking and worthy of consideration. It was not that he did not love and value the religious orders; they were all very dear to him, and we have seen that in 1575 he had already sent into various orders more than three hundred of his disciples. Nor can we suppose that the religious of these orders would have hesitated to receive amongst them a man of such mark and such holiness as was Philip. It is clear that the Barnabites would have gladly welcomed him, and we may safely conclude the same of the Dominicans, who loved Philip so much, and venerated him as a saint. Of his relations with the Jesuits, which are mentioned by his biographers, I will speak more at length.

When S. Ignatius came for the first time to Rome he met Philip, who was then in the flower of his youth, and was struck with his holiness and with his influence over others. He was especially amazed to see that while he directed so many to this or that religious order, he himself continued to live still in the world. And hence, as Bacci relates, he playfully compared Philip to a bell, which calls others into the church, while itself remains outside. No sooner was the Company of Jesus founded than Philip began to send some of his disciples into it, and it is said that the first Italians who entered the society did so by Philip's advice. The two saints became friends, and often conversed

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together with great delight on the things of God. The memoirs of the time tell us that Philip sometimes saw Ignatius all resplendent with the light of Paradise, and that Ignatius regarded Philip as a great saint. It would seem that Philip knew, with some degree of intimacy, the great S. Francis Xavier, who, amidst the corruptions of the sixteenth century, renewed so gloriously the wonders and the virtues of the apostolic times; and it may be that the eager desire he at one time felt to preach the gospel in India was inspired and fed by the memory of his intercourse with the great apostle of the East.[1]

While I am speaking of the friendship which existed between Philip and S. Ignatius, I cannot refrain from alluding to a controversy which has long since ceased, but which I cannot pass over altogether in silence when relating the life of our saint. The three earliest biographers of S. Philip agree in saying that S. Ignatius wished much to draw the saint into his company, because he knew his ardent zeal for the salvation of souls; but that Philip always declined the proposals of his friend. They even say that it was on this account that S. Ignatius compared Philip to a bell. Nor have these writers, who are remarkable for their accuracy, made this assertion on light grounds, for the fact is attested in the process of S. Philip's canonization by eight sworn witnesses. Moreover, Alessandro Ludovisi (afterwards Pope Gregory XV.) repeats it and confirms it in the authentic report of the process which

[1] The existing lives of our saint make no mention of this friendship between Philip and S. Francis Xavier; but in the manuscript memoirs of F. Francesco Zazzara, which are now in the library of the Vatican, I find these words: "On the 2d October 1601, F. Antonio Gallonio and Signor Marcello Vitellesco told me that our holy Father Philip had known and been intimate with the B. Francis Xavier, the companion of the B. Ignatius, founder of the Company of Jesus."

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he made for the Sacred Congregation of the Rota.[1] Among the witnesses who gave their testimony on oath are four of the very greatest authority, whom we cannot suppose to have erred in any matter of fact concerning Philip. These are Cardinal Cusano, Germanico Fedeli, the abbate Maffa, and Marcantonio Vitelleschi, all men of high distinction, and most intimately connected with Philip. They state the fact in terms so clear and precise that there can hardly remain the slightest shadow of a doubt. Cardinal Cusano says in the processes, "that Philip called many into religion, and yet, though entreated by F. Ignatius to enter into the Company of Jesus, he declined to do so." Germanico Fedeli attests that "S. Ignatius much wished and several times tried to draw Philip into the company; but God, who had destined him to be the father of many sons and the founder of a new Institute, gave him no attraction towards the company, although he well knew and recognized its value and sanctity." The other witnesses in the processes are equally distinct and explicit. In his *Memorie Storiche* (Tom. i. lib. ii. ch. 5), F. Marciano writes: "S. Ignatius, who well knew Philip's virtue, had desired and striven to draw him into the company; and he was heard to say that, if he had Philip as a companion, he felt he could convert the whole world. F. Giacomo Lubrano, so well known for his great genius and his profound learning, affirms

[1] The words of the Report of the Sacred Congregation of the Rota are these: "First of all, the Blessed Ignatius, founder of the Society of Jesus, whom the Blessed Philip declares that he saw all resplendent with divine light, very wonderfully loved and cherished the same Blessed Philip. For he was wont to hold with him intimate and pious discourse, and desired to draw him into his Religion as being a man filled with most ardent zeal for the salvation of souls, as is deposed in the summary by witnesses 2, 72, and 160, on art. 37; by witness 163 on art. 82; and on art. 50, cap. 7, by witnesses 61, 72, 74, Cardinal Crescenzio, and 123."

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that he found this written in the records of the company." We have thus a statement made by three most accurate biographers of S. Philip, confirmed by eight witnesses giving testimony on oath, by the authentic report of the Sacred Congregation of the Rota, and by a Jesuit writer, that S. Ignatius tried without success to induce Philip to enter the society. A fact thus attested would seem to be certain beyond doubt.

And yet, in the face of this body of evidence, a doubt has arisen. The continuators of the Bollandist lives of the saints affirm that it was Philip who applied for admission into the company, and that S. Ignatius, for some reason not known, refused him. They adduce in proof the words of F. Lancisius, who declares that he heard it from Cardinal Bellarmine in 1596, and again in 1630 from F. Muzio Vitelleschi, then General of the company, who in 1636 made the same statement in writing.[1] Raynaud repeats the statement, and adds the testimony of Cardinal Cusano to that of Bellarmine and Vitelleschi.[2] These, then, are the three witnesses on whose authority the statement of Philip's biographers is impugned. Now it is obvious to remark that the testimony of these three witnesses is altogether private and personal, and of no weight as against the solemn and sworn testimony given in the processes of canonization, and in the authentic report of the Rota. In regard of Bellarmine, moreover, there is this grave difficulty,—that he himself carefully examined the processes of Philip's canonization and the report of the Rota, and that

[1] *Acta Sanctorum, tom. vii. Julii die* 31 ; *Gloria postuma S. Ignatii Loyolæ, cap. vii. No.* 455.

[2] *Raynaud, tom. ix. Operum S. Ignatii Loyolæ.* Ed. Lugd. 1665.

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he made not the slightest objection to the testimony of the eight sworn witnesses therein contained. The alleged testimony of Cardinal Cusano is absolutely worthless, because he is one of the eight witnesses who, in a solemn and public process, attest the very contrary of what he is made to assert. Vitelleschi's statement was made forty years after the saint's death. He was at that time young; he was much younger still when the words he reports are supposed to have been spoken; and it is far more natural to suppose that his memory deceived him, or that he did not understand what he heard, than that the witnesses in the processes should have attested on their oath an error in a matter so sacred and so delicate as the canonization of a saint. I have no doubt that the witnesses in the process state the exact truth, what they had known or heard from Philip himself and his immediate disciples. On the other hand, both Bellarmine and Vitelleschi profess to have heard from Philip what they affirm. It seems to me very easy to imagine that they took literally, and in their rigorous meaning, some of those words of humble self-depreciation so often spoken by our saint. How often Philip said that he did not know how to pray, that he had not even entered upon a life of perfection, that he had never done any good, that he had not founded any congregation, that he was quite ignorant, and the like. And how easily we can imagine him to have said that S. Ignatius would not have him in the company, when he meant only that he thought himself, or wished to be thought by others, unworthy of an honour so great.

But enough of this discussion. It is far more important to note that during the many years in which

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Philip was preparing to found the Congregation of the Oratory, he never felt called by God to enter any religious order, greatly as he loved them all. He was to found something entirely different from them. His loving admiration of them, and his thorough knowledge of their rules and spirit, led him to resolve to give his Congregation the perfection of the religious state; while his eager desire to make his Congregation a means of raising towards perfection the whole Catholic priesthood, led him to shun even the appearance of a true and proper religious order. Only thus can we understand Philip's Oratory, its usefulness and its beauty. It is not a religious order, but it is bound to aim at the perfection of religious; it does not change the life of the clergy, but in those who embrace his rule it gives it order and vigour and perfection, while it holds forth to all the secular clergy an example it were well to follow.

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CHAPTER II.

FOUNDATION OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE ORATORY—THE JUBILEE OF 1575.

WHEN Philip at length resolved to withdraw his fathers from S. John of the Florentines, and to give a definite and permanent form to the congregation of priests which had grown up around him, he saw that in order to carry out his resolve he must find a church and a house fitted to receive his scattered sons, and that the Congregation itself must first be formally approved by the Pope. The second of these conditions was far more easy than the first, both because Pope Gregory XIII. most readily and gladly approved everything which tended to revive in the clergy the true ecclesiastical spirit, and also because he held our saint in singular esteem, and even veneration. He often consulted Philip on grave matters which regarded the welfare of the Church, and would sometimes so far forget or lay aside his own supreme dignity as to kiss his hand with great respect and devotion. In regard of both conditions Philip cast himself trustfully on God, and prayed with even more than his wonted fervour. But while he was thus recommending the matter to God, and appeared to be still reluctant and hesitating, his disciples set themselves with great activity to look out for a church, and in a very short time they were able to propose to Philip the choice of two. One was S. Maria in Monticelli,

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near the street called *della Regola*, and the other S. Maria in Vallicella, so called because it stood in a hollow, or depression of the ground, in the quarter called *di Parione*. They reported that the former of these churches was larger, and might be more easily obtained; but that the latter was better adapted to their work, as being more in the centre of Rome. Philip refused to decide the question; he deemed it better to consult the Pope, and to abide by his decision. He therefore sent F. Tarugi to lay the matter before the Pope, and then went himself to receive the Pope's commands. The Pope unhesitatingly pronounced in favour of the Vallicella, because it was more central and in a more frequented part of the city, and therefore better fitted for the exercises of the Oratory. To Philip the decision of the Pope was a manifestation of the will of God, and he therefore at once set about the acquisition of S. Maria in Vallicella with great zeal.

The Vallicella was a small parish church, and the rector, or parish priest, was one Antonio d'Ajuti of Messina. Philip asked him whether he would, with the Pope's consent, cede to the congregation the church and the cure of souls, reserving to himself for his life the endowments and other income of the parish. The rector accepted the proposal, and Philip sent F. Tarugi to inform the Pope of the success of his negotiation, and to ask at the same time for a Bull to approve, or rather to give canonical existence to the congregation already formed, partly in S. Giovanni and partly in S. Girolamo. This petition was at once most graciously and joyfully granted by Gregory XIII., and thus Philip founded by apostolic authority in S. Maria in Vallicella a congregation of secular priests to which he gave the name of the Oratory. In this name we may perhaps

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trace some memory of his nights of prayer in the Catacombs, and of the oratories in which he had, with such great and evident fruit, assembled his disciples for prayer and other spiritual exercises. Perhaps, too, the lowliness and unpretendingness of the name were not without an attraction for him; but his biographers tell us that he chose it especially by reason of his great love of prayer, and because he hoped to found a congregation of which the life and soul should be prayer.

The Oratory was founded on the 15th July 1575, and Philip entered on a new life; or rather his life was raised to a higher perfection, and made beautiful with a fairer light. He was now no longer alone; he was authoritatively invested with that character of spiritual paternity whereby the saints are made like to God, and drawn nearer to Him. He had around him a numerous family, bound to him by ties of tenderest affection, in which he was now to perpetuate himself and his spirit upon earth. Jesus Christ said to His apostles after His resurrection and before He ascended into heaven: *behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world*, and so in their measure may the holy founders of religious orders and congregations say. But it is not promised to these families of religion, as it is promised to the Church, that they shall never fail, never forfeit the presence and the care of their founders; wherefore it behoves them to be watchful, and to walk heedfully in the steps and in the spirit of their fathers.

The Bull by which Pope Gregory XIII. founded the Congregation of the Oratory contains some passages which its members should know. The Pope says: "The Lord, who is rich in mercy and glorious in all His works, and from whom all good things come, has deigned to commit to Us, all unworthy as We are, the

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government of the universal Church, and has laid on Our weakness the burden and the yoke of the apostolic ministry, in order that amongst our other and manifold cares we should not fail to choose the labourers whom He may vouchsafe to send into His harvest, that is, amongst the souls prepared to receive His heavenly graces. It is His will, moreover, that the labourers whom we have chosen should be encouraged, by the expression of our paternal affection and by the grant of apostolic favours, to make known throughout His holy temple the compassions and the tender mercies of the Lord, to show His people His ways, and to inflame their hearts with His love by preaching His divine word. To this end it has pleased God to enable us to found several new Congregations of pious men . . . and now our beloved son Philip Neri of Florence, superior of sundry secular priests and clerics, has, in their name and his own, made known to us their desire to have possession of the Church of S. Maria in Vallicella. They propose, with the aid of divine grace, to give themselves to the celebration of Holy Mass and the divine office in that church, to preaching the word of God, and to other acts and exercises of piety. Now, seeing that no small spiritual benefit would accrue to the faithful of that parish from the praiseworthy life and teaching of the forementioned priests and clerics, if in that church there were erected a congregation to be called the Oratory, and if the aforesaid church were given to this congregation, together with the cure of souls; seeing also that thus the divine worship would be celebrated with greater splendour, and the number of priests greatly increased, to the glory of God and the salvation of souls. . . . We therefore greatly commend the pious and praiseworthy intent of Philip and of

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these priests and clerics. Wherefore by our apostolic authority, and by the tenor of these presents, we erect and establish in S. Maria in Vallicella a Congregation of secular priests and clerics to be called the Oratory. And to this Congregation, thus erected and established, we grant and assign by the same authority, and for ever, the aforesaid church, together with the cure of souls of the parish belonging to it, and all charges and burdens, all dignities and rights, all endowments and emoluments of all kinds whatsoever thereto appertaining. And, moreover, we give permission to the superior or his representatives to take instant possession of the Vallicella, and to perform the divine worship in the said church with the approbation of our Vicar, and to claim and receive all dues and emoluments and endowments of all kinds whatsoever, and to apply the same to their own use and that of the church. Furthermore, in the fulness of our apostolic authority, we grant to the Superior and the priests and clerics of the said Congregation permission and full license to make such statutes and rules for the well-being and governance of the Church and Congregation as they think fit, provided always that they be not in contravention of the canons of the Council of Trent. Let them, moreover, reform at their discretion the statutes and rules already made; let them limit them or modify them or add to them, as may appear to them expedient. And such statutes or rules, thus changed or reformed or added to, shall be freely approved by the Apostolic See, and inviolably observed by all members of the said Congregation."[1] From these extracts we see that in this year 1575 the Congregation of the Oratory was canonically erected, but that it had not as yet a rule. It appears that the

[1] Bull of Pope Gregory XIII., bearing date 15th July 1575.

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Pope agreed with Philip in wishing that the rule should rather be the outcome and fruit of a long experience than a preliminary enactment.

When Philip had thus obtained possession of the church of S. Maria in Vallicella, he sent two of his fathers to live there as representatives of the Congregation. These were Giovanni Antonio Lucci, a priest of great virtue who had been for many years a disciple of the saint, and Germanico Fedeli, as yet a layman, but entirely devoted to Philip. They were charged with the divine office, with the care of the parish, and also with the repairs needed in the house and church, both of which were in a very dilapidated state. And then the fathers began to take counsel on the steps to be taken in order to provide for the whole congregation in the Vallicella. Their first thought was, of course, the church; some thought it most prudent to repair it, and others wanted to take it down and build a new and spacious one in its stead. They had no money, and Philip seemed at first as if he did not know what to do; but without yielding to discouragement he turned to God and prayed earnestly for light, that all might be decided and done according to His good pleasure. And one morning he went unexpectedly to S. Maria in Vallicella, and gave orders without a moment's hesitation that the church should be at once taken down and a new one begun; the architect was to be Matteo da Castello, one of the most celebrated men of his day. Where the money was to come from Philip did not say; and so great was the confidence the fathers had in his prudence as well as his sanctity that no one ventured to ask him. In a very short time the little church was taken down and the ground cleared, and Matteo da Castello was proceeding to trace out the

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foundations of the new church. Philip was at that moment going out of the sacristy at S. Girolamo to say mass, and he sent a messenger to tell Matteo not to draw the line which was to mark the length of the church until he came, for that he wished it to be done in his presence. When he had said mass Philip went to the Vallicella; and then Matteo proceeded to mark out the length of the church with a line. When he had reached what he thought a sufficient length he stopped, but Philip said: "Draw it further." The architect did as Philip bade him, and then stopped again; and still the saint said: "Draw it further." Again Marcello did as he was bidden, and a third time the saint cried out: "Draw it further still." When Marcello had drawn it somewhat further Philip said: "now, stop there and dig." And as they were digging they came down unexpectedly upon an ancient wall more than seven feet thick, and longer than the present church. As may be supposed, they were all greatly delighted, and saw in this discovery an omen of good, a manifest token of the blessing of God on their work. On this buried wall they built the whole wall of the church on the gospel side, and they found besides a quantity of solid material enough for the greater part of the foundation and much of the walls of the church. This wall was, moreover, so solid that the part of the church built upon it has not suffered at all, while the other side which was built on new foundations has suffered considerably. The building of the new church was begun on the 17th September 1575, a few months after the foundation of the Congregation, and in the year of Jubilee. The first stone was laid with all due solemnity by one who has been already mentioned as an intimate friend of Philip's, Alessandro

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dei Medici, at that time Archbishop of Florence, and afterwards Pope under the title of Leo XI.

The building of the church and house of the Vallicella went on with a rapidity which is scarcely credible when we remember Philip's poverty, and the principle he had laid down for himself and for his Congregation, never, as he expressed it, to touch other people's purses. He knew the work was God's work, and therefore he cast himself with unhesitating confidence on the Providence of God; and although he was often in great straits he never yielded to discouragement; on the contrary, his courage seemed to rise as his difficulties multiplied. To those who could not refrain from expressing to him their misgivings and fears his answer was: "Well, God will help me." There were some who regarded the undertaking as impossible, and who said it was a very imprudent thing to begin so large a church without money, or reasonable hope of money. To these Philip said: "I would have you know that I have so great confidence in God that I could find it in my heart to throw down all we have built, and to begin a church yet more spacious and more beautiful." One day he said to the Countess Adriana della Genga, with great simplicity and faith: "I must tell you that I have made a bargain with the Madonna that I am not to die till I have seen the church roofed in." It is to be noted that Philip never asked for money, nor would he allow others to ask for it for him. A brother of the Congregation, who was employed about the building, was one day greatly disheartened, and said to the saint that it was surely time to do something, for there was no money left, nor any prospect of getting more, and the walls were not yet finished. Philip answered him: "Don't be anxious, for the Lord will provide us

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all that is needed." The brother was not altogether satisfied with this assurance, and suggested: "There is a certain gentleman who gives away everything he has for the love of God; would it not be well to ask him for a handsome offering for our church?" But Philip replied: "My son, I have never asked for anything, and God has always provided for me. That gentleman knows our need quite well; and if he is disposed to make us an offering, he will do so of his own accord."

And so it came to pass that Philip's unshaken trust in God, the veneration in which he was held as a saint, and the great good that had been done by the Oratory of S. Giovanni, opened the hearts of all, and money was so freely offered for the building of the church, that in less than two years the fathers were able to take possession of it. The first offering towards the new building was made by S. Charles Borromeo, who gave two hundred crowns, or about forty guineas. Soon after this Pope Gregory XIII. sent Philip eight thousand crowns, and Pietro Donato, Cardinal Cesi, bequeathed him another eight thousand. Angelo Cesi, bishop of Todi, and brother of the Cardinal, so greatly loved Philip that he expended on the church as much as thirty-six thousand crowns, besides what he spent on the chapel of the Presentation. A few years later, four thousand crowns were given by Cardinal Frederic Borromeo. An advocate who greatly loved the Congregation left it a legacy of four thousand crowns, and another bequeathed more than eight thousand. Still these sums of money, however large, would have been altogether insufficient, for it was estimated that there had been spent on the church from first to last more than one hundred thousand crowns, an enormous sum

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in those days. A manuscript of Baronius, quoted by F. Mariano, enables us to understand this. He says that the interest taken by the Romans in the new church was so general and so great that there was hardly a person in Rome who did not eagerly make some offering to Philip for it. The poor vied in eagerness with the rich, and their offerings were, in proportion to their means, far more abundant. Every one gave in the spirit of faith and piety, unasked and with good will. The women themselves looked about for some trifle which they might give to Philip for his church, and many stripped themselves of their rings and bracelets and other ornaments to beautify the house of God. It was thus, in this spirit of self-sacrifice and of love, that the first church and house of the Oratory were built in Rome. We need scarcely add that the work of God was not completed without many difficulties and much opposition. Gallonio and Bacci relate that some of the neighbours murmured greatly against the fathers and annoyed them in every way, and that some of the more evil-disposed tried to wound F. Giovanni Antonio Lucci, who superintended the building, with cross-bows and stones. But God, says F. Bacci, always preserved him from harm, and Gallonio adds that Philip warded off from him all danger by his prayers. They add, moreover, that the enemies of the great work were signally and visibly punished by God.

On Septuagesima Sunday, the 3rd February 1577, considerably less than two years from the date of the Bull of Pope Gregory XIII., the fathers of the Oratory began the celebration of divine worship in the church of the Vallicella. It was not indeed completed as we see it now, but it was sufficiently advanced to be used.

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On that glad day it was hung around with costly drapery, High Mass was celebrated by Cardinal Alessandro dei Medici, and the Pope granted a plenary indulgence to all who should visit the church. The concourse of people was immense, a great many received Holy Communion, and from that day the Vallicella has never failed to attract large congregations of the faithful. In the month of April of that same year Philip formally resigned his office of Superior of S. John of the Florentines. Those of the fathers who wished to be admitted into the new Congregation removed to the Vallicella, and those who remained at S. Giovanni still and for many years acknowledged a close and very cordial connexion with Philip and the Oratory. The only regret felt by the fathers was that Philip shrank with such sensitive and persistent humility from even appearing to be the founder of the Congregation, that he still refused to leave S. Girolamo. They did not, however, venture to withstand the will of their holy founder, and therefore quietly awaited the good pleasure of God.

Thus, then, the Congregation of the Oratory, the first seeds of which were sown in S. Girolamo, and which had sprung up and grown strong in S. John of the Florentines, at length struck its roots wide and deep in the Vallicella. Philip's disciples were at S. Giovanni for thirteen years, from 1564 to 1577. They were years of preparation and of experiment, which tended greatly to the prosperity of the Congregation in after times. The rule which Philip gave to the community of S. Giovanni, and the spiritual exercises of the Oratory he there established, were simply transferred and made permanent in the Congregation of the Vallicella. There were made, of course, some few additions and

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improvements, as we shall see in the sequel; but the saint's original idea underwent no change; it was at the Vallicella the very same he had tried from the first to embody in his little room at S. Girolamo. Meanwhile the Florentines began to repent of their distrust of the saint, and sorely lamented his departure from them. Many years later they set up in S. Giovanni inscriptions to preserve the memory of the time when Philip and his fathers had ministered in it. One of these inscriptions records the sermons and exercises of the Oratory during these many years; and in another we find the names of four of the most illustrious disciples of our saint who lived under his rule in S. Giovanni, and were all in after years Cardinals of Holy Church. They are Cesare Baronio and Francesco Maria Tarugi, who were also fathers of the Oratory; and Paolo Sfrondato and Ottavio Paravicino, who continued to be disciples and friends of S. Philip.

In connexion with the building of the church and house at the Vallicella, there are many facts on record which show how wonderfully Philip was enlightened and guided by God in all that great work; of these I will mention only two. The number of the fathers had so greatly increased in a very short time that, even while the building was going on, there were said to be one hundred and thirty subjects of the Oratory. We cannot speak with absolute certainty, for the biographers of the saint do not give the names of all the fathers, but of those only who were the most distinguished. We know that in 1575 Giulio Savioli of Padua entered the Congregation, together with Francesco Bozio of Agubio, the brother of the Tommaso Bozio already mentioned, and himself a learned writer. In 1577 there were admitted Pietro Perrachione of Chivasso in

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Piedmont, Agostino Manni of Cantiano in the diocese of Agubio, a doctor both of canon and of civil law, and lastly, writes Gallonio in his life of the saint, "there was received into the Congregation the writer of this history, who, by the most singular grace of God, was, so long as the blessed Father lived, his most unworthy servant and minister, waiting on him both day and night." In any case, the house was not large enough to hold all the fathers, and they found themselves in great discomfort and perplexity. There was, however, close to their house a small monastery of S. Elizabeth, in which were a few nuns living under the rule of S. Clare, who had just received an order from the Cardinal Vicar Savelli to remove to another house of their rule called *delle Muratte*. The monastery of S. Elizabeth was consequently offered for sale, and several of the fathers proposed to buy it as being exactly what they wanted. The matter was referred to Philip, who would not consent to spend five thousand crowns and more, which was the estimated price of the monastery. He was on the one hand reluctant to load the Congregation with such a debt, until the church had been paid for; and on the other hand he said: "I trust in God that He will in some other way provide a dwelling for us." In spite of this several of the fathers tried, with the best intentions, to get possession of the monastery, for they feared that some one else would buy it, and thus deprive them of all hope of enlarging their house. The negotiations succeeded so far that the price was agreed upon, and the purchase deed drawn up, with the full consent of the nuns. But when they were in the act of making the payment, Mario Marzio, the prelate charged with the temporal affairs of the nuns, refused to accept the bank bill the

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fathers tendered him, and insisted upon being paid in ready money. The fathers urged that this was not usual in such contracts, and the nuns declared themselves perfectly satisfied with the bill; but the prelate continued inflexible in his demand. Pompeo Pateri, a priest of the Congregation, seeing the turn the matter was taking, then went off to S. Girolamo to relate it all to Philip. When he reached S. Girolamo the saint was in the act of going up the steps into the church, and without allowing Pompey to speak a word he said to him: "Didn't I tell you that that monastery was not to be bought? Those good fathers want to have their own way, but mark what I tell you—give me that deed, for although we shall not buy the monastery God will provide for us in some other way." And as Philip said so it came to pass; for within five months Cardinal Cesi, a beloved friend of Philip, and a great benefactor of the Congregation, bought the monastery, together with some other houses, and gave them to the saint.

The other miraculous event took place at the beginning of the building of the new church. F. Antonio Lucci had left a part of the old church standing, that there might be a place in which mass could be said for the parish and the holy sacraments administered. One day Philip sent for him and said, "Go and take off the part of the roof you have kept standing in the old church, for last night I saw the Blessed Mother of God supporting it with her hands that it might not fall." F. Lucci was much surprised at the simple and positive way in which the saint spoke of a prodigy so great; but he obeyed at once, as was his wont, and went off to the Vallicella. And while the workmen were taking off the old roof he found that the beam on which it mainly rested had started from the wall,

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and was left suspended in the air without visible support.

In this same year 1575, Philip took also great interest and great part in a work which was peculiarly dear to him, the great Jubilee which was held in Rome. We have seen that in the last Jubilee of 1550, Philip, though then only a layman, had founded the Congregation of the Trinità dei Pellegrini in order to provide for the crowds of poor pilgrims who came to Rome to gain the great indulgence. Twenty-five years have passed away, and we find Philip's position altogether changed. He is now a priest, and the founder of a new congregation of priests; around him is the flower of the clergy of Rome, and throughout the city he is recognized as a saint. The Pope expresses for him the greatest veneration, and the most illustrious cardinals are now his friends, and seek his counsel. And although he seemed in his great humility unconscious of his greatness and his influence, he drew an immense multitude of persons after him in this great work of lodging and providing for the pilgrims of 1575. It seemed to him not only a good work in itself, but also a means of reviving the spirit of piety and charity amongst the Romans, especially in the cardinals and prelates of the court, and in the clergy generally.

The Jubilee of 1575 was kept with great solemnity, and drew to Rome an extraordinary number of pilgrims. Muratori calculates that there came to Rome that year from all parts of Europe more than three hundred thousand persons, and that there were probably not fewer on any one day than a hundred thousand strangers in the city, drawn thither by their devotion. There were pilgrims of strange garb

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and appearance from Armenia, Arabia, and Syria. There were also many princes of Germany, and with them Alessandro Farnese, Prince of Parma, Paolo Orsini, Duke of Bracciano, Ernest of Bavaria, and others. The Pope gave the first impulse to this great movement of devotion, and it was furthered by the cardinals with singular zeal; but the two persons to whom was mainly due the great success and fruit of this Jubilee were S. Charles Borromeo, and our own S. Philip. They both served with their own hands in the Confraternity dei Pellegrini, of which Cardinal Ferdinando dei Medici, afterwards Grand Duke of Tuscany, was then protector; and they made it the centre of a marvellous and beneficent activity. The Pope had laid in immense stores of provisions, and gave abundant alms. S. Charles gave twenty-five crowns a month to the confraternity; and Philip, by his influence and example, drew thither a great number of cardinals, prelates, princes and religious, all eager to take part in so great a work of charity. The effect was amazing. Muratori relates that from the 25th of December 1574 to May 1575, the confraternity had given shelter and food to ninety-six thousand eight hundred and forty-eight pilgrims. It was an outburst of charity which amazed and subjugated all hearts. In a contemporary memoir quoted by F. Theiner in the second volume of his annals, we read that the officials of the confraternity had, in the great fervour of their charity, promised the Pope that they would lodge and feed six hundred pilgrims a day; but, as the writer of the diary goes on to say, "since the work was of God, it grew so much that the six hundred soon increased to more than six thousand, and during the year the said

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confraternity provided food and lodging for one hundred and forty-four thousand two hundred and sixty-three pilgrims, besides twenty-one thousand during their sickness and convalescence. And these were provided with all things needful to them, some for three days, and others for five days, and those who came from beyond the mountains for ten days. . . . The method observed in that place of benediction is as follows: none are received as pilgrims into the house unless they intend to go to confession and communion the following day, and have with them the token given by the penitentiaries to those who have arranged to do so. When they are admitted, they are served at dinner by illustrious noblemen and gentlemen of all nations, who wear habits of red sackcloth and aprons, and perform the service allotted them with great obedience, humility and charity, and wait upon the poor with such care and diligence, with so much brotherly love and christian oneness of heart, that one would think it a wedding banquet of princes. After dinner they are conducted to the lavatory, where their feet are washed with perfumed waters by prelates and nobles, by gentlemen and artisans, clothed in red sackcloth and aprons, all of whom leave their own affairs to serve the poor with great promptness and a profound humility, turning up their sleeves and kneeling on the ground to wash their feet. The said pilgrims marvelled greatly, and were moved to tears by this great charity, and many of those who were washing the feet of the pilgrims shed tears also at thought of their own unworthiness to perform this office of our divine Saviour. On all sides were heard the remonstrances of pilgrims who refused with tears to allow their feet to be washed by personages of such exalted dignity, and the gentle and humble

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expostulations and persuasions of the princes and nobles that they might be permitted to perform this office of charity. And then was seen the reluctant submission of the amazed pilgrims, and the many acts of humiliation of those who washed their feet, and kissed them, and anointed their sores, and then led them to the dormitory. . . . The same services were rendered to the women by noble and illustrious ladies. Nor was there lack of priests and spiritual men who gave instruction to the pilgrims, and taught them the best way to prepare to receive the graces of so great a Jubilee, explaining to them, so far as the time allowed, the doctrines of the faith, giving them little books to read on their return to their own country, and supplying breviaries to poor pilgrim priests. And alms flowed in with such marvellous profusion and regularity that never was anything lacking that was needful; and it seemed in truth that God always adjusted the supply to the want; for when there were fewer pilgrims the alms were less abundant, and when there were more they always increased in proportion. . . . Who can worthily speak of the wonders wrought day by day by God in that blessed house; of its peace and unity, its perfect order and management, and the readiness and care with which the wants of so vast a multitude were supplied? And then, on their return, the pilgrims were accompanied to the gate of the city, and sped on their way with all they wanted, especially those who came from afar, from beyond the mountains, as having most need. How many effectual resolutions of amendment of life were then made! What amazement was felt, and what emotions aroused, when on their return to their homes the pilgrims recounted the miracles of charity of which they had been the objects

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in Rome! And, moreover, many nobles and gentlemen were so moved by this example that they received very many pilgrims into their palaces and houses, and ministered to them in the same manner. Nor should we fail to speak of the wonderful effect produced on twelve heretics, one of them a leading man in his sect, who had received hospitality in that house; for when they had seen and pondered on all these holy works of charity, they were converted, and returned to their homes with an eager desire to spread the truth in their own land, saying that they had found Rome a holy city, and not at all the Babylon they had been taught to think it."

If, after reading those words of a contemporary writer, we go back in memory to the time when Philip sowed the first small seed of the Confraternity dei Pellegrini, we cannot but adore and bless the Providence of God for the abundant harvest now gathered in. And if we remember the first visits to the seven churches, and read of the visits made in this year of the Jubilee, we shall with the greater wonder and thankfulness glorify God for the grace bestowed on His faithful servant. The pilgrims, as was natural, joined in them with enthusiasm. On one occasion, amongst others, Pope Gregory XIII. himself took part in the pious pilgrimage. He was attended by cardinals, prelates, nobles, gentlemen, and pilgrims without number. And on that day Philip led to the seven churches a procession of many thousand persons, whose fervour he sustained by his own visible holiness no less than by his frequent discourses. At the church of S. Lorenzo outside the walls the Pope joined the procession, and expressed the joy he felt at seeing and embracing his beloved son Philip, and at

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witnessing the blessed results of the pious exercise he had begun. And, amongst other things, the Pope told Philip that it would be a very good thing if there were some one present who would address some words of exhortation to that vast assemblage of the faithful. But Philip, in his great humility, answered that there was indeed present among the prelates Monsignor Alessandro Sauli, bishop of Aleria, a man of singular piety and readiness of speech, and that he was in every way the fittest person to enkindle the hearts of the multitude with the love of God. Whereupon the Pope commanded the blessed Alessandro Sauli to preach, and overruled his humble reluctance and hesitation,[1] and the sermon was most edifying and profitable to all. Thus Philip succeeded in hiding himself, and in bringing out into the light the great gifts of another saint; a saint who like himself would have gladly remained veiled in his own humility, and who spoke only in obedience to the express command of the Pope.

[1] *Memorie de' Barnabiti*, lib. vi. ch. 15.

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CHAPTER III.

S. PHILIP AND S. CHARLES.

THE Jubilee of 1575, by calling Cardinal Charles Borromeo to Rome, was the occasion of renewing and drawing closer still the ties of friendship which bound together the saintly Archbishop of Milan and the founder of the Oratory. Their friendship had begun when S. Charles first came to Rome as a young man, early in the pontificate of his uncle Pius IV. They were, as we have seen, together at the dying bed of that Pope, and they contributed much, each in his own sphere, towards the election of S. Pius V., his successor. At the conclave which resulted in the election of Gregory XIII., and during this year of the Jubilee, they were again brought much together, and learned to value and love each other more. Even while S. Charles was at Milan their relations were frequent and affectionate. Although but few of their letters to each other remain, it is clear from those of S. Charles which are preserved in the Ambrosian library, and from other evidence, that the holy Archbishop of Milan held Philip very dear, spoke of him very often, frequently sought his counsel, and applied to him from time to time for little services, as is usual with friends. We are told that S. Charles never gave away money in Rome, or took any one into his household, without

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asking Philip's advice.[1] And on the other hand, Philip held S. Charles in his heart, and venerated him as a saint. Anna Colonna, who was the sister of S. Charles and a friend and penitent of Philip's, formed an additional bond of union and intercourse between the two friends.

Speciano,[2] who was a contemporary of S. Charles, and who revered and loved him greatly, says that Cardinal Borromeo never went to Rome without bringing back with him some men of great merit and distinction whom he had won to his service and to that of his diocese. And his discrimination of character was so just and true that Pius IV. gave him commission that wherever, in any part of the world, he found, or was informed of, men of piety and learning, he should take note of them that they might when wanted be employed in the service of the Church. S. Philip, too, was always looking out for good priests, and yet he rejoiced in this great gift of S. Charles and spoke of him playfully as "a most rapacious robber, who always carried off the best." With this eager desire to gather around him the holiest and most zealous priests, we can imagine that S. Charles would gladly invite to Milan some of Philip's disciples, in default of Philip himself. And moreover, he, too, was revolving in his mind the institution of a congregation

[1] See Giussano, *Vita di S. Carlo.*

[2] It may interest the reader to know that Speciano was a native of Milan whom S. Charles had made Canon, and whom he employed as his agent in Rome on all matters of importance. His prudence and ability attracted the notice of Gregory XIII., who made him Bishop of Novara. Sixtus V. sent him as his legate to Spain, Gregory XIV. translated him to the bishopric of Cremona, and Clement VIII. sent him as Nuncio to Germany. In this last legation he remained six years, and laboured much and with great success to reclaim the heretics of Bohemia. On his return to Cremona he devoted himself with great zeal to the care of his diocese, and died in the year 1607.

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of secular priests, who might by their example revive in the parochial clergy the true ecclesiastical spirit. He therefore watched carefully the course of the congregation of priests which was growing up around the new apostle of Rome; the meetings of the Oratory were very dear to him, and when in Rome he was frequent in his attendance at them; and he took especial delight in the simple form of community life he saw at S. Girolamo and S. Giovanni, and now at the Vallicella.

Hence the efforts of S. Charles to induce either Philip or some of his more attached disciples to found a congregation of priests in Milan began very early, even before the Oratory was set up at the Vallicella. In a letter written by S. Charles to Ormaneto in 1567, eight years before the foundation of the Oratory, we meet with expressions of this great desire. In the April of the following year he wrote to S. Philip as follows: "I send to you the abbate Agnolini to treat with your lordship about the coming of some of your fathers to me in Milan. Wherefore I entreat your lordship to consider his proposals well, together with the conditions annexed to them; and if you cannot accept them yourself, to send me in any case Messer Francesco Maria (Tarugi) for a short time, with some other fathers to help him."[1] In November 1569 S. Charles felt that there was no use in urging Philip to come to him at Milan, and consequently he writes to F. Tarugi: "I acquiesce fully in the decision of F. Philip that it is not for the service of God that he should leave Rome, considering the great harvest of souls he

[1] These and the following letters are taken from the manuscript and unpublished correspondence of S. Charles, preserved in the Ambrosian library at Milan.

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is gathering in there, and the small number of priests in the community." Notwithstanding this acquiescence he returns with renewed vigour to the charge in 1571, and entreats Philip with great urgency to send him some fathers of the Oratory to found a congregation in Milan. In consequence of the suppression by S. Pius V. of the order of the Umiliati, their beautiful church and house in the Brera at Milan were now vacant, and S. Charles offered both to the Congregation of S. Philip. Thus he writes to Speciano on the 8th May 1571, as follows: "It would be a very great consolation to me if those fathers of S. Girolamo would decide to come to labour and employ their talents for the glory of God in this city, if their leaving Rome did not cause any displeasure to our Lord the Pope. Talk to F. Philip about it, and do all you can to bring him to this decision." On the 15th May he writes again: "In regard of what you write, that the illustrious Monsignor Cardinal Chiese (who was abbot commendatory of the Brera) gives me in charge to appoint secular priests to minister in the Brera, in place of the Frati (the Umiliati), who now no longer exist, nothing whatever has as yet been written to me by the said Lord Cardinal, nor has his agent here said a word to me to that effect. I will therefore wait until his most illustrious lordship shall have written to me. And this is a very good opportunity to invite F. Philip to undertake the charge of that church of the Brera by means of some of his priests. Even if he could not come himself, yet if he would send for that purpose one of the leading fathers, with some others to help him, I would content myself with that. Wherefore speak to him about it, and do what you can to induce him to consent."

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We may be quite sure that the affectionate and genial heart of Philip was not insensible to the urgent and repeated entreaties of S. Charles, and that he would have rejoiced, had it been the will of God, to be associated with so great a saint in such a work. And thus we find that he earnestly desired to comply with the request of his beloved friend, although he could not carry his desire into effect. In 1570 Speciano writes to S. Charles that "F. Philip burned with the desire to go to Milan, and that nothing was wanting but the command of the Pope, without which he would never put foot out of Rome." Not long afterwards Tarugi writes to S. Charles "not to give up the hope that Philip would come and end his days in Milan." This desire was also strong in the hearts of Philip's most intimate and beloved disciples; Tarugi and Baronio amongst others longed to take Philip to Milan, or at least to be sent thither themselves to found a congregation. In spite of this great desire, and the claims of such a friendship, Philip delayed very long his compliance with the request of S. Charles; and he delayed in prudence, as well as from his wonted humility. So long as the congregation was not canonically approved, and had not struck firm root in Rome, he may have hesitated at times as to his course of action, but he could never make up his mind to send any of the fathers to Milan, as he afterwards did. We find indeed that in the lifetime of Cardinal Alfonso Litta there was preserved in the Litta Palace at Milan a letter from Philip to S. Charles, with the date of the 13th May 1572, in which our saint wrote "that he ought not as yet to try any considerable flight from the nest, especially as the first foundations of the congregation were hardly laid; but that he would not

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fail in time to arrange that some of the fathers should go to Milan." In the same year in which Philip wrote these words, S. Charles went to Rome for the conclave in which Gregory XIII. was elected. He had thus an opportunity of urging his request in person, and of setting forth the great advantages of founding a congregation in Milan. But still, while Philip eagerly desired to comply with the entreaties of S. Charles, he would do no more than renew his promise, and ask for time; and S. Charles ended by acquiescing in his decision.[1]

When the congregation had been canonically erected and transferred to the Vallicella, Philip at length ended his prudent hesitation, and resolved to send some of his fathers to Milan. On the 27th May 1575 Fathers Alessandro Fedeli and Pompeo Pateri left Rome by order of Philip, and were accompanied by Fabrizio Mezzabarba, a Milanese, who was returning to his own city. To these two fathers Philip gave authority to treat the matter of the new congregation of Milan with S. Charles; and his instructions to them show the large and generous spirit with which he always acted. The house of the Brera was no longer vacant, for when S. Charles saw that there was no immediate prospect of its being accepted by Philip he had offered it to the Jesuits, and they had accepted it; and he reserved for the fathers whom Philip might send, the house and church of S. Antonio, which were well adapted to the exercises of the Oratory. But Philip refused it at once. He knew that the Theatines were making very urgent application for S. Antonio, and he

[1] See, in addition to the correspondence already referred to, the life of S. Charles by Giussano, and translated into Latin with notes by Oltrocchi. See especially note C to Book iii., chap. viii., p. 260.

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wrote at once to S. Charles to entreat him to "bestow that house of S. Antonio on the Theatines," because he thought that it was more suitable for them than for the Oratory. His request was granted, and S. Charles made other provision for the fathers who were so soon to arrive.

The two fathers Alessandro Fedeli and Pompeo Pateri were not long in reaching Milan, but on their arrival they were called to endure a trial which saddened them greatly. One of them had not brought with him the usual *celebret*, which is necessary in order to obtain permission to say mass. The matter was referred to S. Charles, and notwithstanding his love and veneration for Philip, and his knowledge of the two fathers, he refused to derogate from the letter of the decree of the Council of Trent. It was a severe and a salutary lesson, and it was received in perfect humility and submission. The two fathers then entered on the negotiations with S. Charles, which Philip had entrusted to them, and on the 28th October of the same year, it was concluded that a house of the congregation should be founded in Milan. It was settled that the fathers should occupy, provisionally at least, the house and church of S. Simone, and that the number of the fathers should be four. Thereupon Philip added to the two fathers already in Milan, F. Niccolò Gigli, the Frenchman of whom I have already spoken, and F. Pietro Peracchione, of whom Speciano says that "he was venerable by reason of his great sanctity, although he was the youngest in years." We may here mention that S. Charles had set his heart on having Baronio in Milan, but Philip was deaf to all his entreaties, being unwilling to part from a son so dear to him. He wrote a

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playful letter to S. Charles, in which he tells him that he was "a daring robber of good souls, and a man who would strip one altar to adorn another." Meanwhile in their great zeal for souls both Tarugi and Baronio longed to be sent on this mission to Milan, and they opened their hearts to Philip. But the saint peremptorily refused their request, for indeed he felt he could not in the infancy of the congregation deprive himself of its two most valuable members; and then, when everything was settled with S. Charles, Baronio fell ill, and Tarugi was found indispensable during the building of the new church. It would seem that Tarugi especially was much grieved by this refusal; but he sacrificed his wish to obedience, and made no reply. He had hoped to draw Philip to Milan, and had expected great results from their labours in what he deemed a rich and fruitful soil, compared with which Rome and Tuscany appeared to him barren. When he found that it was the will of God that he should remain in Rome, he consoled himself by doing everything in his power to further the prosperity of the new congregation in Milan; but in the secret counsel of God it was ordered that that same plant of the Oratory, which flourished afterwards so vigorously in Naples and in many other cities of Italy, should languish and die away at Milan, though tended by the saintly archbishop himself.

When Fathers Gigli and Perrachione arrived in Milan, and set themselves to work to found, with the two fathers who had preceded them, the congregation in S. Simone, the Cardinal was at Bergamo, holding his visitation. He heard, however, of their arrival from Speciano, and expressed his great joy; and on the 26th October, he wrote to Speciano as

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follows: "I shall have great pleasure in seeing those fathers from S. Geronimo, who are come to S. Simone in Milan, and especially the one of whom you speak so highly; and they will be made very much of by all my attendants and clergy. I don't want any such thing to happen to either of them as happened to that other father from S. Geronimo, who came with Mezzabarba in the summer without his *celebret*, and whom I would not allow to say mass. In case the Reverend Father Philip should hesitate at all about accepting S. Simone, as you seem to hint, I will look out for some other place for them, and the rather that S. Simone is somewhat out of the way."

And indeed, difficulties and inconveniences of all kinds were from the first felt by the little congregation. The house of S. Simone was situated at some distance from the city, and not at all fitted for the exercises of the Oratory. Tarugi stated everything to S. Charles, who wrote again from Bergamo directing Speciano to offer the fathers the Basilica of S. Fulcuino, and for the sermons the house of the Holy Sepulchre, and promising to erect in the crypt of this latter church twenty-four chapels adorned with paintings of the mysteries of the Passion. Some difficulties which are not mentioned made this project abortive; and then the Cardinal thought of assigning to the fathers as their residence the Hospital of S. John, called the *Case rotte*, which was certainly much more convenient. But here again there arose fresh and insuperable obstacles, the chief of which was certainly the unwillingness of the fathers to leave the church of S. Simone for another. From the very beginning Philip had requested that the church assigned to the fathers should be of the Roman rite, and not of the Ambrosian, and S. Charles had sought to comply

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with this request. Speciano writes that Philip accepted the church of S. Simone "only because it followed the Roman rite." Now the other churches had always followed the Ambrosian rite, and S. Charles would make no change or exception even for an object he had so much at heart. Much as he desired the establishment of the congregation in Milan, he wrote to Speciano on the 8th October 1576 that all he could do was to allow the fathers to use the Roman rite for three months, or four at the most, until they became familiar with the Ambrosian, and it was this obligation to adopt a strange rite that neither the Oratorians nor Philip could bring themselves to undertake.

There was another difficulty of even greater magnitude. S. Charles had for a long time wished to establish in his diocese a community of secular priests, and he had set his heart on Philip's congregation. As he saw it in Rome, he thought it holy and useful, and in every respect satisfying his ideal of what a community of priests in a diocese like Milan should be. But when he saw it in its infant state in Milan, he found that it did not fully meet his expectations and his wishes. As was very natural, the two saints agreed perfectly in thinking that a congregation of secular priests, living only for their own personal sanctification and for the salvation of souls, would do very great good in any diocese; but they did not agree in the detail of work and of duty which would best secure the end both had in view. S. Charles was an archbishop, and sought principally for help in the government of his diocese; while Philip was a priest, and aimed rather at leading priests to a life of perfection, and so rendering them venerable in the eyes of the faithful. And hence it soon appeared that there was a great and vital difference

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of opinion between the two saints as regards the work in which the fathers were to be employed. Thus Speciano, in a letter dated September 3d, urges, on the part of Philip, that the fathers of the Oratory should not be employed "in the examination of the clergy and in the visitation of the diocese, and in other such works, which tended to lessen the affection of the people for them." But this was not at all the idea of S. Charles; he wished the fathers to be simply his ministers, and to help him in every way to bear the burden of his vast diocese. And hence, when, in September 1577, the fathers seemed disposed to insist on their rights in the Oratory of Milan, S. Charles wrote to Speciano as follows: "I see that the ideas of these fathers do not at all agree with mine. They want their congregation to depend on themselves alone, and I want everything to depend on me; it being my object to have at hand a body of men, formed indeed of priests of the Oratory, but ready to obey every intimation of my will." Now this was not the idea of S. Philip. S. Charles then embodied his own conception in the congregation of the Oblates, which in its rule and spirit greatly resembles the Oratory, with this essential difference, that its members depend absolutely on the bishop, who may employ them in any work for which he deems them fitted. As was natural, his interest in the Oratory declined; he wrote, however, to S. Philip, asking him to send him some subjects fitted for the work of the Oblates, and our saint gladly sent him several.

If we now go back to the month of July, in the year 1576, we find that the four fathers sent by Philip to Milan had been for a few months settled and at work. The difficulties of which we have spoken were not as yet very apparent, or they were but slightly felt. Mean-

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while they were affectionately welcomed both by the clergy and the people; their labours were successful, and they hoped that all obstacles might vanish as time went on. This was the confident hope of Tarugi, who still looked with great interest on Milan, and regarded it as a second home. One day in this month of July Philip said to him: "Write in my name to the fathers in Milan, and tell them that, as soon as they receive your letter, they are to come back to Rome." Tarugi, who had done so much to aid the foundation of the Milan Oratory, ventured to use every means to change Philip's decision; and when he found that arguments and entreaties were alike powerless, he implored at least a brief delay. He urged that this sudden departure of the fathers might give some scandal to the faithful in Milan; but Philip, though exquisitely sensitive in regard of scandal, bade him write at once. Tarugi obeyed, and as soon as the fathers received the letter, they set out for Rome.

Subsequent events made this abrupt command of Philip appear to be a miracle or a prophecy. Scarcely had the fathers completed the preparations for their departure, when symptoms of plague appeared in Milan, so that, if they had not left it when they did, they would have found the way to Rome closed against them. Two of them who passed by Pavia had very great difficulty in evading the guards who were stationed on every road, and were even kept for ten days at the gates of Cremona. This was the fearful plague of 1576, which desolated so many cities in the north of Italy, the plague in which S. Charles displayed such heroic and incomparable charity that it was always spoken of as "the plague of S. Carlo."

It may, at first sight, seem strange and surprising

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that Philip should thus recall his fathers from Milan, at the very moment when the danger was greatest and the need sorest. It is probable that S. Charles thought it so, for he sometimes, in after days, spoke of Philip playfully, as "a man without compassion." But, in the first place, all strangeness and difficulty vanish in the light of prophecy which seemed to counsel this recall; and then, Philip saw clearly that the Oratory was not destined to take root and thrive in Milan. He therefore prudently anticipated the return to Rome of his fathers; they had no strict obligation towards the people of Milan, and they were greatly needed in Rome and elsewhere. And, although S. Charles expressed his sorrow and regret at the departure of the fathers, he never withdrew his affectionate veneration from S. Philip, and repeatedly urged him to set up the Oratory again in Milan.

In the October of this same year, and while the plague was still raging, S. Charles, in a letter to Speciano, expresses his sorrow that the fathers had left Milan and his desire to recall them, precisely because the ravages of the plague made their return so desirable.[1] And the correspondence on the re-establishment of the Oratory continued for several years, both because S. Charles never ceased to feel great affection for the Congregation, although he wished it to be more dependent on his will than its rule allowed, and because he hoped that it would do very great good in Milan. We find in Gallonio that F. Pompeo Pateri was sent again by Philip to Milan in 1577 "for certain important affairs." He adds,

[1] See the life of S. Charles already referred to: Note E of Book iii., p. 260, and note B of Book iv., pp. 307, 308.

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that F. Pompeo tried to excuse himself on the ground of his unfitness for such a charge, and that the saint insisted on his going, and said to him as he was leaving Rome: "Go, and put your trust in God; but beware of examining the commands of your superiors, for everything will turn out happily for you, as you will find." "And so it turned out," says Gallonio, "and that very speedily, notwithstanding the great opposition made to him by persons of high dignity, and the threats they uttered against him." But he does not say what the matter was which ended so happily. We find only that, in 1578, the negotiations for the return of the fathers to Milan were renewed, and that a Father Giovan-Paolo was sent thither with the following letter from Philip to S. Charles: "I have received the letter of credentials delivered to me on your behalf by the abbate Agostini, in regard of the matter of S. Simone. Our Father Giovan-Paolo will be able to tell your most illustrious Lordship what we have in common resolved. And, if this be confirmed there by your deputies, you will know that we are disposed to come and labour for the service of God in Milan, and wherever it may please His Divine Majesty to call us; although it appeared to us hardly consistent to take so great a step while our affairs in Rome are not as yet firmly settled. For the rest, though I have had no other occasion of employing myself in the service of your most illustrious Lordship, I am at your command now and always, in heart and soul. We will strive to have a part, through your prayers, in the great good which our Lord God is doing in your city by your hand, beseeching Him to prosper it to His honour and glory. Humbly kissing your hand, I beg your blessing for myself, and this our little congregation."

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This letter is the last trace to be found of the desire of these two great saints that a congregation of the Oratory should be erected in Milan; we know only that these negotiations had no further results, and that, not long after, the fathers of the Oratory finally left S. Simone.[1] The Lord called them elsewhere, probably in order that He might raise up, by means of S. Charles, a new congregation, the Oblates, which has rendered such signal service to the Church. S. Philip and S. Charles were saints who embodied one and the same idea in two congregations, distinct, yet not unlike, each admirably adapted to its immediate end.

But notwithstanding the failure of the attempt to found the Congregation of the Oratory in Milan, the mutual veneration and affection of the two saints suffered no diminution. In 1579 S. Charles was again in Rome, and again we find him living in habits of closest intimacy with S. Philip. Either because he was so much younger, or because his exalted rank constrained him to greater humility, the great cardinal took pleasure in assuming towards Philip the attitude of a disciple, while Philip manifested in a thousand ways the reverence with which he regarded S. Charles. He visited Philip very often, and would remain three or four hours in conversation with him. He consulted him on the affairs of his diocese, on the distribution of his alms, on the rule of the Oblates. He often said office with him, and joined with him in prayer. There was about Philip something so saintly and divine that S. Charles, cardinal and archbishop and saint as he was, did not deem it unbefitting his dignity to kneel and

[1] Some years after the saint's death the *Filippini* went back to Milan, and the Congregation existed for some years. But this fact does not belong to the life of S. Philip.

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kiss his hand with tears of tender devotion. He recommended himself earnestly to Philip's prayers, and always spoke of him as a saint. On the other hand, Philip's humility suffered greatly by reason of these demonstrations of veneration, and the more that, as he himself said, he had one day seen the face of S. Charles lighted up with a splendour, soft and winning as that which clothes the angels of God.

On the 4th October 1579 S. Charles gave a proof of his affection for Philip, which it is a perpetual joy to his sons to remember. On that day the cardinal came to the Oratory at a very early hour, before the sun had risen. He said mass, and gave communion to such crowds of people that it is said that noon had struck before he had finished.[1] Persons of every rank and condition received holy communion from his saintly hand, and among them a man singularly distinguished for his learning, Martino de Aspilaceta, called the Navarese, who on that day abstained from saying mass that he might receive communion from S. Charles. After having thus passed the morning, the cardinal dined with the fathers, examined with affectionate interest the rule and the customs of the Congregation, and talked familiarly with the fathers. He assisted at all the sermons and spiritual exercises, and then took supper and slept in the house, to the unutterable joy and consolation of all. In the manuscript life of our saint we are told that after supper he ordered one of the fathers, Giulio Savioli, a devout and austere priest, to deliver a short familiar sermon in the refectory, *to catch the holy cardinal with guile by the simplicity of his*

[1] We find this stated in the life of S. Charles and elsewhere. But its more probable meaning is that when he had said mass S. Charles came out from time to time to content the people by giving them communion with his own hand.

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speech. And this he did especially to mortify that father, who had a great reluctance to speak of the things of God, and especially in presence of a personage so exalted in dignity and in sanctity.

On the next morning, as he was taking leave of the fathers, he said to them: "Happy indeed are you, who live under the care and direction of so great a master!" These are words of price, and we should treasure them in our hearts with those other words uttered by S. Charles one day as he was coming out of Philip's room: "Philip is a man of marvellous sincerity and singular holiness." God has granted us this blessedness, that we are Philip's children; and our father is a great saint, above all things sincere, a lover of truth—a goodly and a sufficing portion, surely, in this world of sorrows and deceptions.[1]

During this visit to Rome S. Charles took every opportunity of studying the form of Philip's preaching and that of the other fathers, and it delighted him greatly. He strove to extend it both in Rome and in Milan; and in the rule he gave to the Oblates he directs that they shall preach familiarly, after the manner of the Oratorians, while in Rome he urged it upon an institute which was dependent on him.

There was at that time in Rome a confraternity of secular priests, mostly Lombards, and consequently known as the priests *delle province Lombarde.* This confraternity met at first at S. Peter's, and then in the church of S. Ambrose in the Corso; and it was greatly and deservedly valued by S. Charles. It naturally attracted and bound together all the Lombards living

[1] The words of S. Charles first quoted are preserved for us in the notes to his life, and also by Bernabei and Sonzogno, in their lives of S. Philip. The second are recorded by Marciano and several other writers.

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in Rome, and amongst its members were many prelates and even bishops of Lombardy. Hence this confraternity appeared to S. Charles admirably fitted to form a school of good and holy preachers, and he therefore strove to introduce into it the style of preaching which he admired at the Oratory for its simplicity and fervour. Now the usual sermons and spiritual exercises do not take place at the Oratory on Saturdays, and therefore S. Charles gave directions that there should be on that day three sermons in the church of S. Ambrose, one of which was to be preached by a prelate of the confraternity, a second by some religious, and the third by a father of the Oratory. He further directed that all should follow as closely as possible the style of preaching usual in the Oratory; and that they might be drawn to love it, he entreated Philip to preach one day in his presence to the Lombards in S. Ambrose; Philip consented on condition that S. Charles should also preach one of the sermons. Moreover, that the confraternity of S. Ambrose might more closely resemble the great work of S. Philip, S. Charles ordered that between the prayers and the sermons there should be sacred music, and that pious hymns should be sung, such as were used at the Vallicella.[1]

In 1581 an incident occurred which brings out very strikingly the mutual affection of these two great saints. At the earnest entreaty of Duke William of Bavaria S. Charles requested Pope Gregory XIII. to choose two priests versed in the sacred ceremonies, and to send them into Bavaria to reform what was wrong or defective in public worship in that country. The Pope chose for this purpose two of the priests of the original

[1] *Marciano, Memorie Storiche*, tom. i. chap. ii. and chap. iv.

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community of S. Girolamo, and Speciano, who was S. Charles's agent in Rome, wrote to him that these two priests would be very soon on their way. S. Charles concluded at once that they were priests of the Oratory, and expressed the great joy which this appointment gave to the Duke as well as to himself. But it so happened that these priests shrank from so long a journey, and obtained from the Pope a release from the engagement they had contracted. Thereupon S. Charles wrote to S. Philip, expressing the great disappointment he felt, and charging the fathers of the Oratory with disobedience. Philip was, of course, startled and grieved; it was a charge which wounded him to the quick. He felt too that, were the accusation true, S. Charles would naturally think that he wished the fathers of the congregation to be in some respects independent, not only of the bishops their ecclesiastical superiors, but even of the Pope himself. He therefore wrote at once to S. Charles, as follows: "Our Lord the Pope sent me yesterday a postscript written by your most illustrious and reverend Lordship, from which it appears that you are anything but satisfied with our congregation, under the supposition that two of our priests had first given a promise to go into the service of the Duke of Bavaria, and had then revoked it, a change which amounted to an act of disobedience to his Holiness. I have therefore thought it well, with that same frankness which you yourself are wont to use in all your proceedings, to clear up this matter to you, for no other purpose than that you may know the exact truth. You must know, then, that the two priests who are reported to have acted thus are not members of our congregation, but chaplains of the confraternity of Charity at S. Girolamo, with which we

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are not in any wise connected, as Monsignor Speciano can inform you. Moreover, I can assure your most illustrious and most reverend Lordship that there has not been in this matter any question of an obedience from the Pope; and I affirm this positively, because I myself in person treated of it with his Holiness, whom I am thus constrained to invoke as a witness. Wherefore I entreat your most illustrious and reverend Lordship not to believe us capable of such contumacy as to refuse obedience to our Lord the Pope. Were it otherwise, we should deem ourselves to have fallen into most grievous error and sin, from which we trust and pray that our Lord will ever, by His holy grace, deliver us. And we further entreat you that you would deign to favour us with your prayers, and that if any rumour should reach you of anything either in me or in any of our fathers which deserves correction, you will yourself perform this act of charity towards us, and we shall accept it as a most especial favour. And with all our fathers I humbly kiss your hands.—June 15, 1581." It would seem that this letter did not entirely satisfy S. Charles, or at least that Philip thought it did not; for he soon after sent to the holy Cardinal a certificate from these two priests of S. Girolamo to the effect that there was no connexion whatever between their Confraternity and the Oratory, and that Philip had nothing to do with their refusal to go to Bavaria. When S. Charles received this certificate he could not but rejoice that the Oratory was cleared from all suspicion of disobedience, but he at the same time thought he detected in Philip a somewhat excessive sensitiveness to the fair fame of the congregation; he therefore wrote to him as follows: "Assuredly I had no need of the formal certificate of the two priests to convince me

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that they did not belong to your congregation, for your own word is proof enough for me. But this somewhat inordinate affection towards your congregation, however you may justify it to yourself, seems to me a matter on which I could find something to say to you, and I will gladly say it when we next meet. Meanwhile I commend myself earnestly to your prayers."

The reproof which S. Charles thus affectionately intimates is one which we, the children of Philip, can hardly regret. It comes to this, that our saint loved his sons too well, and too sensitively defended their honour; that it was intolerable to him that even the shadow of disobedience to the Vicar of Christ should dim the beauty of his congregation. Even were it so that his love was excessive, and his susceptibility somewhat exaggerated, who of us can lay this to his charge as a fault? When S. Charles came for the last time to Rome, a few months later, we may be sure that they decided this point of conscience in such wise as to increase their love and their esteem for each other.

Here we may record an incident which occurred either in this last visit of S. Charles to Rome, or in the one before it, and which brings vividly before us the lowliness of heart and self-abasement of these two great saints, as well as the gentle and almost playful humour of S. Philip. S. Charles had naturally pondered deeply the rule he wished to give to his beloved congregation of the Oblates, and had submitted it to the judgment of several persons of great discernment and experience. He had now brought it with him to Rome, and entreated Philip to read it carefully over, and suggest such changes as he might think advisable. But Philip refused, or rather evaded the request of his friend; he said he was quite incompetent, he had no

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talent for such things, he was too much occupied with the care of the congregation, and the like; nor could S. Charles induce him to comply with his request. He then asked Philip to take a drive with him in his carriage, with the intention of eliciting the saint's opinion in conversation. Philip consented, but on condition that the carriage should go wherever he wished. S. Charles was not unfamiliar with Philip's ways, and was prepared for some meaning in this condition; and so he smiled as he said: "Well, then, be it so, Father Philip." When they started on their drive, Philip told the coachman to take them straight to the Capuchins at S. Bonaventura. S. Charles thought that he wished to call on some great personage of that order, known for his learning and experience; and certainly none but a master-hand could venture to touch the long-pondered work of the Cardinal. But when they reached the Capuchins Philip bade the porter go into the garden and fetch Fra Felice da Cantalice, who, though a saint, was only a lay-brother and altogether ignorant of letters, and him he charged, in the presence of S. Charles and to his great amazement, to examine that book of rules carefully and suggest what alterations should be made in it. We can readily imagine the confusion and consternation of the poor lay-brother; he urged with great simplicity that he could not even read, and that it was a task altogether above him. But Philip well knew what light of heavenly wisdom was veiled beneath that poor and lowly exterior; he therefore insisted, and at length commanded him in virtue of holy obedience to examine and correct that rule; if he could not read he could get some one else to read it to him, and to note down on a slip of paper whatever he did not entirely approve.

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S. Charles, who knew nothing of the sanctity of Fra Felice, stood aghast at seeing the revision of his rule entrusted by Philip to a man so rude and ignorant; but the event proved the wisdom and sagacity of Philip's conduct, for Fra Felice suggested two alterations which S. Charles thought so prudent and just that he adopted them. It is said that one of these corrections was the striking out of the words by which S. Charles had intended to bind his Oblates to holy poverty. It may be doubtful whether this device of Philip did succeed in convincing the Cardinal of his inability to correct the rule himself; in any case it is quite in keeping with the saint's method of mortifications, and with the playful and quaint caprices with which he strove in vain to hide the lustre of his holiness and his miracles.

A few years later, in 1584, S. Charles fell asleep in the Lord, at the comparatively early age of forty-six. In the eyes of men his death was premature, but in the judgment of those who read all human events in the light of God, he died full of days and at the fitting time. Philip indirectly foretold the death of the great and saintly cardinal. Ceccolino Margarucci, a priest and protonotary apostolic, and a great friend of Philip, had been sent by him into the household of S. Charles, and was a member of what was called the archbishop's family. In this year, 1584, he obtained permission to return to his own country for three or four months on some family business, and while there he wrote to Philip asking him to obtain for him a certain favour from S. Charles. Philip answered at once that there was no use in making the application, for that when he returned to Milan something would have occurred which would remove him from the cardinal's family.

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Ceccolino could not at the time make out what Philip meant; but within a month took place the death of S. Charles, and he then returned to Rome. When Philip saw him his first words were, "Did I not tell you that something would happen to prevent your ever returning to the service of Cardinal Borromeo?"

While writing of the sacred friendship of S. Charles and S. Philip, my thoughts have reverted often to the time, now ten years since, when I was writing of S. Peter Damian, and of the ties which bound his heart to that of S. Gregory VII. And even as these two saints of the eleventh century showed, notwithstanding their strong mutual affection, very marked differences of natural character, and sometimes even differed greatly in judgment; so was it to some extent with our two great saints of the sixteenth century. I do not forget, that while Hildebrand held S. Peter Damian in singular veneration, he opposed him at times with great vigour; so that S. Peter spoke playfully of the archdeacon as his *santo Satan*, his holy adversary. So we find in S. Charles and S. Philip some differences of natural temperament, nor were their judgments always the same. And hence, it seems to me we may learn that neither sanctity, nor the supernatural life, effaces the natural character, nor so moulds the soul as to change its native form or crush its inborn impulses. Rather do we see in the more eminent saints a personality, an individuality, which stand out in high relief, so that we recognize each at a glance. If it seem to us at times that the characters of the saints are almost monotonous from their too great resemblance, it is because their biographers have been so intent on exhibiting one by one their supernatural virtues, that they have forgotten or have cast into the shade the natural character of

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each. But if we study the saints somewhat beneath the surface, if, above all, we ponder their writings and their letters, then each puts on his own distinct and special form. And it is this special form that charms while it instructs us; it seems to us more human, more akin to ourselves; we see in the saints somewhat of ourselves, of our own life with its passions and its warfare, and so we take courage to go on in their footsteps.

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CHAPTER IV.

PHILIP'S LOVE OF HIS COUNTRY AND HIS RELATIONS—HIS ILLNESS—SISTER ORSOLA—THE MASSIMI.

AMIDST the labours of his apostolate in Rome Philip had never forgotten his beloved Florence nor his relations; his affection for both was sanctified and ennobled by the ardent love of God which transfigures all earthly love, and gives it a supernatural tenderness and beauty.

One indication of his love of Florence is the eager interest he always took in the welfare of the Florentines living in Rome, as if he wished to make them more worthy of the fair city of Dante and of Giotto, of S. Antoninus and Michelangelo. We find another proof of it in the year of the great Jubilee. There came to Rome in that year, amongst others, Messer Vittorio dell' Ancisa, chaplain of the Cathedral of Florence, and then about thirty years of age. He was a priest of singular virtue and charity; and his first care, on reaching Rome, was to see his fellow-citizen Philip Neri, who was talked of so much in Florence as a saint. As soon as Philip saw him he knew at once, by that intuition which is the gift of really great men, and especially of great saints, all the merit of his visitor, and received him with as much regard and affection as if he had been an old friend. He even constrained him to come and live with him at S. Girolamo, and made him hear confessions in his own confessional.

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Vittorio on his side cast himself into the arms of Philip as into those of a father, a master, and a guide. The Florentine Memoirs relate amongst other things that in 1587 Ancisa obtained from the Grand Duke Ferdinand de' Medici, and from the directors of the great work of S. Paul of the convalescents, the ancient hospital of S. Philip and S. James, and established in it, by Philip's advice, a monastery of enclosed nuns, to whom Philip himself gave the name of the *Stabilite* of Messer Vittorio. These are the nuns who occupied for some time the convent of la Scala, where there remains still a record of the part Philip took in their institution, and who were afterwards removed to the monastery of Monticelli outside the gate of S. Frediano. Not long before his death the saint wrote to Messer Vittorio a letter in which he says: "I will not cease to pray God to bestow on you day by day more and more strength and virtue, so that you may bear the burdens which He is pleased to lay on your shoulders; and this I most earnestly desire for the sake of our country, to the spiritual benefit of which tend all your exertions."[1] And thus, when Philip one day said to a sister of the Tor di Specchi: "My country is heaven," he did not mean to disown and forget his country here on earth, but to remind us that there is another country brighter and fairer far, and abiding for ever. He would not disconnect our home on earth from the *home of our eternity*, any more than he would separate man from God; in his idea, our earthly country is then dearest and fairest when it reflects to us and leads us towards the heavenly.

We find here and there some indications, moreover, of Philip's love of his family. I know, indeed, that in

[1] Letter xxiv.

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regard of family affections and ties he was somewhat rigid and exacting, notwithstanding the tenderness and warmth of his natural character. It was, indeed, this very tenderness, this capacity of deep and strong affections, which made him fear for himself and for others the risk and peril of inordinate home attachments. He had ever deeply graven in his heart the words of Jesus, *he who loves father or mother, brother or sister, more than Me, is not worthy of Me.* Wherefore he urged on his disciples a great detachment from relations and from home; and he often refused leave to the fathers, especially if they were young, to visit their homes, lest they should imperil their vocation. For himself, he dreaded always that the love of his family might even tend to withdraw him from his sacred apostolate. Although there may have been some intercourse with them of which no memory has been preserved, yet it is clear that he did violence to his own heart, and was in this regard uncompromising and even stern. Some records, however, of this intercourse remain. We cannot forget the loving generosity with which he made over the inheritance of his father to his sisters Caterina and Elisabetta, without reserving any portion of it for himself. We find also several letters written to his nieces, and especially to a daughter of the sister who had married Barnaba Tregui; and as these letters open to us the heart of Philip, they let us see both how and how much he loved his family.

In 1575, the year of the Jubilee, Barnaba Tregui, the husband of Philip's sister Caterina, died, leaving a daughter, a nun in the convent of S. Peter Martyr in Florence, and a son still very young. When Philip heard of his death, he wrote to his niece the nun a

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letter we should read with attention. We see in it a certain anxiety about the worldly affairs of the family; but it is an anxiety so restrained, so calm and peaceful, and so interwoven with his greater anxiety for their spiritual welfare, that it seems something new and strange to us who are so fretted with worldly cares. He writes thus: "I know well that the death of your father of blessed memory (may God have received him to Himself in His glory!) must have caused great sorrow to his family, not only from the loss of the guidance of a man so kindly and so capable, but also from his having left the burden of the house on the shoulders of a son who is still too young to rule it as is befitting. For one must have lived long and gained much experience, to acquire the prudence and sound judgment which are needed to steer and command the bark in storm as well as in calm. Nevertheless, I trust that God will give him virtue and wisdom to make up for what is lacking in years. And then I know that he has had a good education, and I feel sure good Messer Barnaba has left his affairs in good order and easy to understand; so that if he goes on in the way thus marked out for him I do not doubt that the family will persevere in well-doing and in the fear of God, and in the same good order as when your father was alive. For these reasons I have felt great sorrow at this bereavement, and have not failed to pray to God, and to get others to pray, for the repose of his blessed soul. Nor will I ever forget you, his children and my nephews and nieces, in the holy sacrifice and in my prayers, that you may be aided in spirit by His divine goodness and prudence, to the salvation of your souls; and that you may be, as regards the body, protected in all your temporal affairs, so far forth as may seem to the Lord expedient for

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what we should most hope for and love, the glory of God by means of a good life. I need not offer you my services, because the ties of relationship bind me to aid you; and, moreover, because by the grace of God I am poor and old and infirm, and so can aid you very little in worldly matters. But such as I am, I will always gladly do anything in my power for you in all your need, loving you as I do with all christian sincerity, and being to you, both in age and by relationship, as a father."

Having spoken with this beautiful simplicity and wisdom on the death of his brother-in-law, and the management of the family affairs, Philip goes on to advise his niece on spiritual things, and to speak of the desire she had expressed to make her confession to him. He continues thus: "You who live securely in a convent are not exposed to all these changes and chances of the world. And although I know that you do in your charity and with due moderation sympathize with your brothers and sisters, yet, as you tell me in your letter, you take all things as from the hand of God, conforming yourself and resigning yourself in every thing to His divine good-pleasure. And this is, in truth, a way in which we cannot go wrong, and the one only way which brings us to taste and to enjoy that peace which sensual and earthly men know not of. Thank the Lord for the grand and secure state to which He has called you; if indeed you know, as I trust you do, the worth of a vocation so high. In regard of the desire you express of making your confession to me if you were ever within reach of me, believe me, my dearest niece, you have the stay and support of very good religious; and if you are only sincere, and open your heart in all simplicity to your confessor, God will never

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fail to do for you all that is necessary for your spiritual profit. God never fails in what is necessary, and He is not prodigal of what is superfluous; and since you are in a place where you must be of necessity in the hands of one man alone, if you will only pray, and have a real honest wish to be good, God will put Himself into the mouth of your confessor, be he never so unskilled, so that you may not lose the fruit of your faith and of the preparation of your heart. Recommend yourself fervently to God before you go to confession or to ask counsel of him who is set over you; clothe him in your heart with the person of Jesus Christ our Lord, and feel that God Himself is speaking to you; be ever ready to obey him and to believe him rather than yourself, or your companions who have perhaps but little spirituality. And thus you will prove how true are the words of the Holy Ghost, who says of our superiors and pastors: he who hears and obeys his superiors hears and obeys Me; and he who despises them despises and disobeys Me.

Our saint concludes by giving his niece some instructions of the greatest value on sickness. After speaking of a sister Dionisia, who had been for a long time ill, and of the compassion he felt for her, he continues: "That longing of hers to get well, if only it bear the impress of these conditions—if it so please God, and be expedient for the salvation of my soul—may be put up with, because we can do a great many good things in health which we cannot do in sickness. I believe, indeed, that the safest thing would be, *what God wills*, and to ask Him for patience in her sickness; for very often, if we recover from sickness, we not only do not do the good we had proposed to do when we were ill, but we multiply our sins and ingratitude, and become

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tender of our bodies, and even sensual. Nevertheless, we will pray for her, but always with reserve of the above conditions."

Not long after writing this beautiful letter, and while he was still laying the foundations of his beloved congregation in the Vallicella, Philip was suddenly seized with a dangerous illness. In the beginning of 1577 he had an attack of fever, so severe that in a few days he seemed to be at the point of death. Now during this illness it happened that one night he was so much worse that he could not sleep; and about midnight he asked earnestly to be comforted and refreshed with Holy Communion. But Tarugi would not allow it to be given him, fearing that Philip's great devotion and the abundance of tears he was wont to shed at communion would prevent his getting any sleep that night, and that the disease would be thus greatly aggravated. But Philip grew more and more restless from the yearning desire he felt to receive our Lord, as one who craves the food which is denied him. At length he called Tarugi and said to him: "Francesco, I cannot sleep, nor shall I ever be able to sleep, till I have received into my soul that Lord who is all my desire. Don't fear that my devotion to Jesus in the sacrament will hurt me, but be sure of this, that as soon as I have received Him the peace and the sweetness of my soul will give me sleep." And so it came to pass; after communion he slept profoundly, and in a very short time recovered his usual health; and hence the fathers were accustomed to give him holy communion very often when he was ill, because they saw it brought him, not only spiritual consolation, but healing and strength.

It was indeed generally believed by Philip's disciples that in his illnesses he was miraculously sustained and

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relieved by Almighty God. There is one fact in illustration of this which is recorded in an inscription at S. Girolamo della Carità, and which I give from the processes of the saint's canonization. In the deposition made on oath by Petruccio of Siena in August 1595, he says: "I knew F. Philip for thirty-five or thirty-six years, and he was my confessor. Now about thirty years ago the said F. Philip had a very serious illness at S. Girolamo; he was very poor, and was in such a state that the doctors thought him past all hope. While I was staying with him in his room he asked me to give him some water with a little pomegranate juice in it, and I looked about for some sugar to temper the sourness of the pomegranate juice. While I was thinking what I should do, a youth, whom I had never seen before, stood marvellously before me with a loaf of sugar in his hand. I did not ask him whence he came, but sweetened the draught and gave it to F. Philip, and he got well again, though the physicians had given up all hopes of him."

We have already had occasion to speak of the method in which Philip led many Roman ladies in the way of Christian perfection. As his reputation for sanctity extended, and his wisdom and prudence as a director of souls became more widely known, he was brought into relations with many nuns, and especially with those of the noble community of the Tor di Specchi, and with many other ladies who were leading saintly lives. And as we have spoken of the holy advice which he gave to his niece, a nun of Florence, it is natural to speak also of what he did about the same time for a nun of Naples, whose name is in great veneration throughout that city. It will show us our saint under another aspect, and we shall see that

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he had a method of spiritual direction all his own, and that he employed it with unfailing success.

It was the year 1582, and notwithstanding the efforts made by Gregory XIII., by our S. Philip, and many other saints to complete the reformation of discipline and of morals in the Church, there were still many evils to deplore. Now there lived at Naples at that time in a certain hermitage on the beautiful hill of S. Elmo, a virgin of singular piety and strength of mind. Her name was Orsola Benincasa, and she was probably descended from a branch of the family of that name in Siena; of which was born that glory and wonder of the Church, S. Catherine of Siena. This holy sister Orsola was favoured with ecstasies so frequent as to be almost incredible; and as she was one day all absorbed in God, and glowing with His holy love, she believed that our Lord commanded her to go to Rome as His messenger, to admonish the Pope to proceed with more vigour and energy in the reformation of the Church, and that otherwise God Himself threatened to visit Christendom with severe and unheard-of chastisements. The holy virgin at first resisted this heavenly impulse, but was at length constrained to obey it. She went to Rome, accompanied by several members of her family, and with a recommendation from her confessor to the Cardinal of Santa Severina. She reached Rome on the 3d of May, and a few days later she had an audience of the Pope, who was then at Frascati. When she was ushered into the presence of the Vicar of Christ she showed no signs of fear, and rose to the full height of her mission. She spoke frankly and with an unwonted courage. She declared that she would never have dared to speak, but that Jesus Christ had commanded her; and His

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command who dare resist? She spoke for some time in the same tone of calm assurance, but always with great simplicity and modesty. Her discourse was several times interrupted by ecstasies, and three several times she was, in the presence of Pope Gregory, rapt in God, and lost to all sense of what was going on around her. The Pope, who was very pious and devout, and who was daily doing what he could to promote the true reformation of Holy Church, was amazed at this solemn embassy, and probably hesitated to receive it as undoubtedly from God; but he gave no sign of displeasure. He made answer to the holy virgin in few words, and amongst other things he said: "Pray to God, my dear child, that He may grant us all His forgiveness." And then the audience ended.

While the Holy Father was pondering her words, the strangeness of the occurrence, the ingenuous simplicity of the holy virgin, her courage in venturing to present herself before the Pope to speak of reform, and more than all, perhaps, her frequent ecstasies, caused a great sensation throughout Rome. The matter was everywhere talked about, and, as was very natural, there were great differences of opinion and feeling. No one seemed at first inclined to believe that she had a real extraordinary mission from God. Very discreet persons thought that there was much reason to distrust this young girl, and to inquire into her motives. They suspected that beneath her exterior of piety there was a secret and subtle womanly vanity, a wish to be thought a saint, and then some fantastic illusion, or some morbid condition, which suspended the action of her senses. After much thought, the Pope very prudently appointed a special Congregation charged to examine the spirit of Orsola, and to report to him the result of their

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inquiry. The Congregation consisted of the Cardinal of Santa Severina, Cardinal Carafa, Monsignor Speciano, the friend of S. Charles, F. Acquaviva, general of the Society of Jesus, Tarugi, and two canons of S. Peter's. But it was the Pope's wish that Philip, who was so well known, not for his holiness alone, but for that special gift which theologians call discernment of spirits, should be the soul of the congregation; and, indeed, when its members met, they entrusted the whole inquiry to Philip, and abode by his decision.

Bacci tells us that Philip, with his shrewd common sense and spiritual prudence, liked women to stay at home and attend to their families, and appear but rarely in public. He was also wont to say that visions, ecstasies, and other graces, which are called by theologians, *gratis datæ*, are very often only illusions of the fancy; and in the life of Sister Orsola we are told that he showed to a niece of her's a passage of a certain writer on mystical theology, in which it was said that out of a hundred supposed ecstasies hardly one is real and true. To this we may add that Philip's own humility, and his shrinking from the notice of men, would naturally lead him to suspect the holiness of a simple virgin who took upon herself to admonish the Vicar of Christ on the discharge of his duties. In any case, he felt sure that the virtue which cannot endure the mortification of self-love is never solid and lasting; and we know that, in regard of spiritual mortification, he was at first sight almost excessively severe and exacting. And now that he was called upon to examine the virtue of a woman who was regarded as a saint and an *estatica*, he relied with security on this test of mortification, and applied it most searchingly and unsparingly. This, then, is a case in which we shall see

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the special character of Philip's sanctity, and also the firmness and vigour which lay beneath his gentle, compassionate, and cheerful manner.

The Congregation appointed by the Pope met twice a week in the apartment of the Cardinal of Santa Severina. At their first meeting Philip was commissioned to make proof of the spirit of the alleged *estatica*, and then she herself was brought up before them. After a few questions about her coming to Rome, and whether she had received permission from the archbishop of Naples to come, as well as from her own confessor, Philip began his examination in a manner which would amaze those who did not know his character and his ways. He turned towards Orsola, and in presence of all the members of the congregation he called her a proud, ignorant, lying, self-willed, and hypocritical woman. He put on an air of anger and scorn, and said to her: "Do you fancy that God has no one more worthy to be an ambassador to the Pope, than a wretched and ignorant country girl like you?" And while giving utterance to these sharp rebukes he kept his eyes fixed on her countenance, to see if he could detect any trace of discomposure or wounded self-love. But Orsola stood calm and unmoved, and answered only: "Father, I am indeed all you say, and worthy only of every chastisement. But I entreat you, help me, father, and apply a remedy to my many ills, for my one only desire is to be healed. I wish for nothing else but Jesus Christ. If it be an evil spirit that leads me, I implore you, father, to drive him away from me." Thus ended the first meeting of the congregation; but that same day, Orsola tells us in one of her letters, S. Philip "placed himself in the street by

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which I was going back to my house, and said to me, 'Now, do you say to me all that I said to you to-day.' And I answered, 'No; for all those things are very true of me, but of your reverence they would not be true at all.'" And thus we see that Philip, after having mortified the holy virgin, strove to mortify himself, while at the same time he sought, with his wonted sweetness and charity, to soften the harshness of the words he had just spoken.

Still Philip was not satisfied with this first test of Orsola's spirit in presence of the Congregation; the question was far too important to be lightly decided, and for seven months he continued to try her with every kind of mortification. He affected to treat her with the utmost contempt; he tried to wound her self-love at every point; he deprived her of everything that could give her any pleasure, and even of spiritual consolations; he exorcised her as if he regarded her as one possessed with a devil; he seemed to seek to rouse within her a spirit of impatience; he threatened to bring her before the Inquisition, and to alarm her by speaking of the most terrible punishments. At first he allowed her to live with her relations; but one day he ordered that she should be put into a closed carriage and taken to a house in which lived some Spanish ladies together with a priest, who were all entirely devoted to him. While she was there he would not allow her to see her sister and her niece, who still remained in Rome; and he directed the priest and the ladies to treat her with contempt and disdain, as if they thought her an altogether worthless person. When he suspected that his orders were not strictly carried out, he had her removed to the house of Antonina and Cassandra Raide, two of his spiritual

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children of rare virtue, on whose perfect obedience he could depend. He directed them not to allow Orsola to see any one, to keep her constantly occupied with the lowest and most toilsome drudgery, to disturb her in her prayers, and to prevent her from going to mass and receiving holy communion. This last privation was Orsola's sorest and sharpest trial, but she strove to bear it, as she had borne the others, in perfect patience and peace. But the effort affected her health so much that Philip, finding her one day really ill, sent for the parish priest to give her holy communion, and she immediately recovered her health and strength. And then, doubting whether her frequent ecstasies might not proceed from some morbid affection of her nerves, he made her swallow, under the advice of two physicians, a most nauseous medicine, which, however, produced no effect whatever.

And yet, notwithstanding these and other tests applied so perseveringly for seven months, Philip could not quite persuade himself that Sister Orsola was of sound mind. It was indeed wonderful that she should have endured them all without the faintest trace of discomposure; that the more Philip mortified her, the more she reverenced and loved him, regarding him as a saint, kissing his feet, and thanking him for treating her as she deserved; and that even when he threatened her with the Inquisition she only answered humbly: "Father, I am ready to obey even to death." At length Orsola's patient perseverance in suffering, the complete victory she had gained over self, her strong and trustful love of God, overcame all Philip's hesitations, and this the more easily that he was especially enlightened by God in the matter. He thereupon reported to the Congregation that Orsola

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was a virgin of singular simplicity and love of God, and that in his judgment the spirit which led her was good and holy. The Pope and all Rome accepted this decision without hesitation; and it was ordered that Orsola should be allowed to return in peace to Naples, and to carry out her design of founding a convent of Theatine nuns on the height of S. Elmo.

Her mission had its full effect. From that time the Pope had still more than ever at heart the holy reformation of the Church. Amongst other great works, he created to this end a college of four Cardinals, two of whom, S. Charles Borromeo and the blessed Paolo of Arezzo, were saints, and the other two, Cardinals Paleotto and Aldobrandini, men of great piety and wisdom, and both of them disciples of S. Philip. He also erected, on different points of Christendom, twenty-three colleges for the training of ecclesiastics, who, by their learning and piety, might aid in reviving the spirit of faith and religion.

Meanwhile Orsola left Rome with the full conviction that Philip was a very great saint. Before her departure, she asked to see him once more, and to receive his blessing. Philip received her with great pleasure; he had no longer need to mortify her, nor to hide from her his gentle, kindly, cheerful soul. They had a long conversation, in the course of which Philip said to her: "Fear nothing, for there is no reason for suspecting any snare of the adversary. Give thanks to God who has given to us both grace to do our duty, enabling me to make you suffer, and you to suffer cheerfully for His sake. The Lord is with you; and if you would preserve and increase His grace within you, be always mindful of your own nothingness. If ever you begin to take pleasure in

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being called by others a saint, be sure that very pleasure will strip you of all good. Wherefore say always in your heart: 'All glory and honour belong to God alone, and not to a worthless sinner like me.'" Orsola tells us in one of her letters that, as they walked up and down together in conversation: "he said to me, 'Even as we are now walking together in this room, so shall we one day walk together in Paradise.' He then gave me the berretta which he was wearing, and with his own hands put it on my head, saying to me: 'Whenever you take off your coif put this berretta on your head that you may get no harm.'" And thus they parted, and this was the pledge Philip gave to Orsola of his veneration and regard. She always treasured this berretta with great affection in her own Oratory, and to this day the nuns of her community hold it dear as a relic of our saint, and as a memorial of the esteem in which he held their venerable foundress.[1]

The family of the Massimi is distinguished even in Rome, not only for its illustrious descent, but for its many virtues; and the Romans still point to the Palazzo Massimo as the *Palazzo del Miracolo*, the palace of the miracle. And with this miracle is bound up the memory, so fresh and dear to them still, of the great saint who was so closely connected with the Massimo of his day; who obtained for them so many blessings and graces so abundant, and who wrought in their behalf so many miracles. Fabrizio Massimo, Lord of Arsoli, was born in 1536, and although he was much occupied with public affairs

[1] See the two lives of Suor Orsola Benincasa, one by F. Giovanni Bagata (Rome, 1696), and the other by a Clerk-regular (Rome, 1796); and also the printed processes of the canonization.

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and with the care of his great estates, he was for thirty-five years the penitent and disciple of S. Philip. By degrees his esteem and his love for his director became so great that he would have no other counsellor even in his temporal concerns. It is said that the purchase of the Castle of Arsoli was effected by Philip's advice, and at the entrance of the armoury of the castle is this inscription: *Divi Philippi Nerii consilium felicitatem dedit et servavit*—The counsel of Blessed Philip Neri brought happiness and made it lasting.

In his youth Fabrizio was eager and impetuous, but always very devout, and in all things obedient to Philip. In 1562, when he was twenty-six years of age, he married Lavinia dei Rustici, daughter of Camillo and Ludovica Crescenzi, whom Litta speaks of as a lady of great beauty and of still greater virtue. At first Lavinia, who knew but little of Philip, laughed at him, and at what she thought his odd ways and fancies, and felt surprised and even annoyed at the respect with which he was always spoken of. But one day she heard the saint speak of God, and of His holy love, and from that moment her whole life was changed. There sprang up in her heart a yearning desire to love God, and to serve Jesus Christ. She took Philip for her spiritual father, and she thenceforward went to confession and communion three times a week, laid aside all the vanities of the world, and gave herself with such application to prayer that she was often rapt in ecstasy. Under Philip's direction she became so holy and charitable and gentle, that when she died, on the 30th October 1575, in her thirty-second year, he said of her: "Lavinia is gone straight to heaven into joy with the angels." She gave her husband ten children, some of

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whom died young, and the others were led on in the way of the Lord by Philip and the fathers of the Oratory. And thus Philip was the friend and the guide, the light and the joy of that christian household.

In November 1577, Fabrizio married again, and his bride was Violante Santa Croce, another of our saint's penitents, who was also accustomed to frequent the sacraments three times a week. In her deposition on oath she says, amongst other things: "I often heard Signor Fabrizio say that whatever Father Philip counselled him to do turned out well; and although I had not noticed this, I always held him and hold him now a saint; would to God I were such!"

In Philip's life are several facts which explain to us the great veneration in which Fabrizio held Philip. He was not only attracted and subdued by his great virtues, but had been often witness of the miracles of his life. One morning he was going to confession, and as he was wont to do, he opened the door gently and went in. He walked up to Philip until they were face to face, and saluted him. But to his amazement Philip was lost in abstraction, his features motionless; he evidently heard nothing, and made no answer. Fabrizio then spoke louder, and with a feeling of wonder and awe; but still Philip neither heard nor answered. He was rapt in God, raised on his feet, his eyes upturned to heaven and his hands upraised in prayer. Fabrizio looked at him again with increasing awe, and did not know what to do; when Philip suddenly returned to himself and spoke to Fabrizio as if nothing had happened. He asked him how he had got in, for he had deemed himself secure from all observation. Fabrizio then said he had not found the door bolted; and then,

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without another word, the saint heard his confession. It happened, moreover, that Fabrizio had five daughters in succession and eagerly desired a son. Lavinia was again pregnant, and when the time of her delivery was drawing near, Fabrizio asked the holy father to pray for her. Philip stood for a few moments as if lost in thought, and then said: "This time your wife will give you a son, but I wish you to give him a name of my choice; do you agree to this?" Fabrizio answered: "Yes." "Then," replied Philip, "I give him the name of Paolo." It was never known for what reason he had chosen this name; but the prophecy was repeated on the next occasion, and the son then born, received, at Philip's request, the name of Peter. From these and many other supernatural events Fabrizio felt so great devotion to Philip that he was almost constantly with him, and often found consolation and peace in merely standing at the door of his room.

Fabrizio was, as we have said, Lord of Arsoli, and in the castle are still preserved some memorials of Philip. Two rooms are pointed out with great veneration, as having been inhabited by him on his visits to the family of the prince; but the castle is associated with another wonderful work of our saint. It was the month of July 1591, and two of Fabrizio's sons were very ill, so that one of them could take nothing but a little broth, and the other took even that with great repugnance. Fabrizio wished to take them to Arsoli, hoping thus to save their lives; but the physicians whom he consulted said at once that a journey of twenty-eight miles in the dog-days would certainly kill them both. Fabrizio was still anxious, and seeing that his sons were pining away, he went off to consult the holy father, who, in presence of the physicians, told him to

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take them to Arsoli by all means, and to order the litters for the journey to be ready early the following morning, and bade him have no doubt or hesitation on the matter. Fabrizio asked the saint's blessing, and set off the next morning with his children. As Philip had said, they suffered nothing on the journey; nay, one of them, Peter, got out of the litter when they had gone four miles out of Rome, mounted a horse, and rode the rest of the way as if he had been in perfect health.

Again, in 1590 Fabrizio had put out a sum of more than four thousand crowns on the life of his daughter Elena; and as he was leaving Rome in the spring to go as he was wont to his castle of Arsoli, he went to take leave of the holy father. Philip said to him: "Be sure before you go to take up that money which depends on your daughter's life." Fabrizio did not obey, however; his daughter was so young, in such perfect health, so lively and brisk, that he thought it not at all necessary or pressing. But in September Elena fell ill, and died before any steps could be taken to secure the money. And Fabrizio himself states that when he came back to Rome in October, the saint said to him: "Didn't I tell you to take up that money? If you had done as I wished you would not have lost it." Elena died on the 9th September 1593, when only fourteen years of age; she was a child of singular piety, and was regarded by those around her as an angel in human form. Gallonio says of her: "This maiden was most fervent in her love of Christ, most obedient in everything to her spiritual father; she shed bitter tears while meditating on the passion of Jesus, and communicated three times a week with marvellous devotion; she delighted greatly in prayer; she despised herself, and deemed herself

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lowest of all the creatures of God; and she longed for suffering that so she might be the more conformed to the Passion of our Redeemer." In her last illness, at the moment when Baronio gave her holy Viaticum, she saw in vision our blessed Lord sprinkling her soul with His most precious blood; and then, having foretold the time of her death, she peacefully fell asleep in Jesus. Now, at the moment of her death the holy father saw in ecstasy, as Baronio tells us, that holy angels bore her soul to Paradise with singing of most ravishing sweetness. And in a manuscript of the Vallicella library Gallonio adds: "This same fact of the escort of the soul of Elena by angels with heavenly melody was told me by Father Philip himself, because she was my spiritual child, and therefore I dared not ask him more." We may add, moreover, that this vision of the death of Elena has been engraved by Gian-Battista Leonetti from a drawing by Luigi Agricola, amongst others which represent the wonders of S. Philip's life.

And now we must narrate the crowning miracle wrought by our saint on behalf of the Massimo family. It is a miracle attested on oath by Fabrizio Massimo, the father of Paolo, by Violante Santa Croce, his second wife, and by Francesca di Antonio of Civitella, her waiting-woman. They attest what their eyes saw and their hands touched; they give their testimony with great simplicity, without doubt or hesitation. Gallonio, who in his life of S. Philip first printed the account of this miracle, had been six years in the Congregation when it took place; later biographers have repeated it, and Bacci, who had seen and read the processes of the saint's canonization, adds some few details.

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It was in the year 1583. Philip was in his sixty-eighth year, and although he had long since founded the congregation at the Vallicella, he himself still lived hidden in his little room at S. Girolamo della Carità. Amongst many youths who were dear to him the dearest was Paolo Massimo, the child of prayer and prophecy, whose name he had himself chosen, for some reason to us unknown. Paolo was the hope and joy of a family beloved and blessed by God. His mother Lavinia dei Rustici died in peace in 1575, when he was only six years old; and not long after God had given him a second mother, Violante Santa Croce, a lady of great and rare virtue. Philip loved Paolo tenderly, and we are told that the child went every week to confession, and passed the greater part of his time either in the church or in Philip's room.[1]

On the 10th January 1583, when the boy was about fourteen years old, he fell sick of a fever which lasted for sixty-five days without intermission, so that he was brought to the threshold of death. Philip went to see him every day, for he loved him tenderly, and many of the fathers of the Oratory visited him frequently. One day F. Germanico Fedeli, marvelling that a boy so young could endure with such patience an illness so long and so painful, asked him: "Would you like now to exchange your illness for health?" and Paolo answered that he would not exchange it for anybody's health, as he was quite contented with his sickness. Philip knew well, by a supernatural light, that Paolo would die; and he was glad and grateful to see him in such holy dispositions, and gave directions that he was to be sent for when the end drew near. On the 16th

[1] *Istoria di Elena dei Massimi*, written by Gallonio in 1593. (Rome, 1857).

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of March the poor boy was so very much worse that Fabrizio sent off in great haste a servant called Francesca to tell Philip that, if he wished to see his beloved Paolo alive, he must come at once, for that he was now at the point of death. When Francesca reached S. Girolamo she found that Philip was saying mass, and she therefore left a message for him, and returned to the dying Paolo.

Meanwhile death was hastening on. Camillo, the rector of the parish, was sent for, gave the dying boy Extreme Unction, and made the commendation of his soul to God, watched his death, and then, when all was over, took his leave. The sorrowing father closed the eyes of his beloved son, and Francesca was preparing water to wash the body, and linen for the burial. Just half an hour after Paolo's death Philip arrived; Fabrizio went down to the door to meet him, and said with tears: "Paolo is dead." Philip then asked: "Why did you not send for me?" "We did send, father," replied Fabrizio, "but unfortunately you were then saying mass." Then Philip entered mournfully into the room wherein lay the body of Paolo, and threw himself at the foot of the bed, praying with great fervour, while his heart beat with unwonted vehemence and his whole body trembled. He then arose, took some holy water, sprinkled it on the face of the boy he had loved, and put a little of it into his mouth. And then he breathed upon the face, laid his hand on the forehead, and called to him with a loud, clear voice: "Paolo, Paolo!" and at his voice the boy opened his eyes as if he had been roused from sleep, answered: "Father!" and immediately added: "I had forgotten a sin, and should like to go to confession." Philip thereupon sent away those who were gathered round the

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bed, and putting a crucifix into Paolo's hands, heard his confession. He then called all back into the room, and began to talk with Paolo about his mother Lavinia, who was with God, and about his sister Julia, a nun in the Tor di Specchi, who had died two months before, and whom Paolo had tenderly loved. The conversation lasted about half an hour, and the boy answered everything with a clear and distinct voice, as if he had been in perfect health. The colour had come back to his wasted face, and it seemed to those present as if there was now nothing the matter with him. At length Philip asked him, "do you die willingly?" and Paolo answered,—"yes." Philip a second time asked him the same question, and Paolo answered again with great decision that he died most willingly, especially because he was going to see his mother and his sister in Paradise. Then Philip blessed him and said: "Go then, and be thou blessed; and pray God for me!" And with a placid countenance, and without the least movement, Paolo breathed out his soul in Philip's arms. There were present at this scene Fabrizio Massimo, with two of his daughters, who were afterwards nuns in S. Maria, Violante Santa Croce his second wife, Francesca the servant, and several others. It was to them all an impenetrable mystery that within an hour Paolo should have died, and been raised from death, and then have died a second time.

Forty years passed away, and in 1622 Fabrizio Massimo and Violante his wife, both then well stricken in years, after having borne their testimony to this resurrection, and to Philip's many virtues, assisted at the triumph of his canonization. Some few years later, we know not how many, the room in which Paolo was raised from death was changed into a chapel, enriched with costly marbles, and with many relics of the saint

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And this chapel of the Palazzo Massimo is visited year by year by both Romans and strangers with great reverence, especially since it was declared by Pope Gregory XVI., on the 2nd of February 1838, to be a public chapel. Nearly three centuries have passed away since that wonderful 16th of March 1583, but its memory is still fresh in the hearts of the people of Rome, who flock in crowds to the solemn feast which is celebrated on that day in the church of the Palazzo Massimo. And now, by grant of Pope Pius IX., they have a proper mass of the day, every part of which carries back their minds and hearts to the great miracle wrought by God three centuries ago through His servant Philip.[1] Neither space nor time can divide the generations of the faithful in the Church of God; as we kneel in that chapel we assist with faith and gratitude at that ever-memorable miracle, the awakening of Paolo Massimo from the slumber of death at Philip's call.

[1] Pius IX. granted this mass by a decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, bearing date 1st March 1855, and moreover gave permission that the same mass should be said on that day in the chapel of Orsoli, already enriched with so many privileges. This is the chapel of which Elena dei Massimi, whom Philip saw borne by angels into heaven, took such loving care. What holy and soothing memories of himself our saint has left in the one family of the Massimi!

END OF VOL. I.

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